

FOSTERING WHOLE PERSON DEVELOPMENT THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL:  
A CASE STUDY

by  
Joshua Cassidy  
Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe how Coach Clark (pseudonym) addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School (pseudonym). Whole person development (WPD) during adolescence was generally defined as human development that was meant to involve all the parts (i.e., cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical) of a person. This study answered the following central research question: How does Coach Clark address the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School? The results of this study showed that Coach Clark addressed the cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical development of his players by loving them, taking a player-by-player approach, preparing them for life after high school, creating a family-oriented environment, helping them develop a sense of purpose beyond themselves, building resilience in them, and developing a year-round strength and conditioning program. Through data triangulation, validity and credibility was added to the findings by using (a) interviews, (b) documentation, and (c) observations. Using categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, pattern identification, and naturalistic generalizations, data from within the case were analyzed for similarities and differences for each piece of data collected. The theory guiding this study was the five Cs (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring) of positive youth development (PYD) theory developed by Lerner, Lerner, and their colleagues.

*Keywords:* whole person development, positive youth development, high school football, football, coach, student-athlete

**Copyright Page**

### **Dedication**

Whenever you say yes to something, you are saying no to something else. Upon completion of my pursuit to become a Doctor of Education, I have said no to my wife, and our three sons. I believe time is our greatest asset and although I said no to you all on several occasions, I was not merely dedicated to becoming Dr. Cassidy, I was dedicated to each of you and to being the example I believe I am called to be for you. I hope that my actions have demonstrated that I have dedicated my life to serving all four of you!

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### **List of Abbreviations**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

National Federation of High Schools (NFHS)

Positive Youth Development (PYD)

Qualitative data analysis software (QDAS)

Relational Developmental Systems (RDS)

Sport for Development (SfD)

Whole Person Development (WPD)

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this chapter is to create a rationale for studying (Creswell & Poth, 2018) how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School. If properly designed, high school football provides positive developmental experiences for adolescents by way of positive adult-youth relations (Bowers, Geldhof et al., 2015; Holt et al. 2017; Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015; Pierce, Gould, & Camiré, 2017; Whitley et al., 2019), life skill building activities (Agans, Champine, Johnson, Erickson, & Yalin, 2015; Hodge, Danish, Forneris, & Miles, 2016; Holt et al. 2017; Pierce, Kendellen, Camiré, & Gould, 2018), and leadership opportunities (Agans et al., 2015; Gould, 2016; Gould, Voelker, & Griffes, 2013; Holt et al. 2017; Pierce, Blanton, & Gould, 2018). This research study was grounded in positive youth development (PYD) literature as it takes a strength-based perspective regarding adolescents as possessing resources to be developed, rather than issues to be fixed (Holsen, Geldhof, Larsen, & Aardal, 2017; Holt et al. 2017). How Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School was the overarching central research question and was followed by several sub-questions. In this chapter, I provide a background section of the most relevant adolescent development literature and include the historical, social, and theoretical context for my research problem. Also within this chapter, I incorporate a discussion of how this issue pertains to me, offer a description of the identified problem, purpose, significance of the study, sub-questions to the aforementioned central research question, and definitions for making connections across the literature.

## **Background**

Adolescence is a stage of life that occurs between the ages of 10 to 18 when youth experience many individual (i.e., puberty, identity) and environmental (i.e., building relationships, moving from middle to high school) changes (Lerner, Morris, & Suzuki, 2017). WPD is composed of its parts (e.g., cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical) and their intricate dynamic exchanges (Witherington, 2017). Adolescent development through sport has been dominated by PYD literature over the past two decades (Kendellen & Camiré, 2019). As an approach for understanding adolescent development, PYD maintains that all youth can develop to their full potential when their abilities and interests are supported with resources in their environment (Lerner et al., 2017). Among scholars, educators, practitioners, and policy makers, there is a long-held belief that sport is a setting where participants attain positive developmental outcomes (Weiss, Bolter, & Kipp, 2016). In high school sports, research suggests that student-athletes have experienced a variety of positive and negative developmental outcomes (Kendellen & Camiré, 2015). To appropriately position current PYD, and PYD through sport research, it is necessary to use its historical origins, developmental science, and youth sport psychology research (Weiss, 2016).

## **Historical Context**

Informed by advancements in biology and developmental science, PYD is a modern interpretation of adolescent development which challenges previous opinions that concentrated on youths' problem behaviors (Lerner et al., 2017). For example, the founder of the scientific study of adolescent development, G. Stanley Hall (1844-1924) identified puberty as a time of storm and stress when adolescents experience biological changes (Dahl & Hariri, 2005) characterized by fluctuating moods, conflict with parents, and an interest in engaging in risky

behaviors (Lerner et al., 2017). During the mid-20th century, this commanding view of youth development was continued in the work of Anna Freud and Erik Erikson by portraying youth as troubled and vulnerable. Moving beyond this time period, new research revealed a lack of evidence for the universally problematic model of adolescence (Lerner et al., 2017). In the 1990s, PYD research arrived promoting the strengths of adolescents and the importance of their environment on their overall development (Lerner et al., 2017). From 2000 to the early 2010s, the advancement of PYD was bolstered by developmental psychologists who reported on the processes and outcomes involved (Weiss, 2017).

Influenced by both developmental and sport psychologists, Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, and Jones (2005) adapted PYD related literature to suit the particular setting of sport by creating a framework for planning youth sport programs to promote psychosocial development in participants. Although developmental psychologists are credited for inspiring a movement towards viewing youth as resources to be developed in out-of-school activities, almost a century of inquiry on adolescent development through sport has been conducted by youth sport psychologists (Weiss, 2016). For decades, the processes and results associated with adolescent development have been reported in youth sport literature (Weiss, 2016). For example, Weiss (2016) reported that adolescent character development through sport was an area of research focus dating back to 1930. Weiss (2016) referenced an article that identified what character building is and how it should be designed, and described the article as relatable to today's adolescent sport psychology research. Likewise, there were studies conducted as far back as the 1940s linking adolescent athletic participation to social development through social status, feelings of belonging, and making friends (Weiss, 2016).

The foundation for positive development in youth is the relationships they establish with loyal and committed adults (Bowers, Geldhof et al., 2015). In both past and present youth development through sport research, parents and coaches are studied the most (Coakley, 2016; Weiss, 2016). For example, youth sport research from the past 25 years suggests that adolescents with parents who believe in them, model positive behaviors, and value sport for development are those who experience favorable outcomes (Weiss, 2016). Regarding the coach-athlete relationship, as early as the 1970s, research was conducted on coaching behaviors, and has continued for five decades revealing that coaches who offer greater support, training, and encouragement, with lower criticism and punishment, aid in positively developing student-athletes (Weiss, 2016).

I selected Coach Clark as a single significant case because he offered a thick and rich understanding for how to effectively deliver WPD during adolescence through high school football at County High School. For example, Coach Clark was referred to as a second father by his student-athletes, and someone who they sought advice from regularly (Cates, 2018). Furthermore, Coach Clark's work with developing his student-athletes impacted the entire County High School community as they adopted the football team's "power of one" mantra to overcome the tragedies of two student deaths and a tornado (Roy, 2016). For his efforts with WPD during adolescence through high school, Coach Clark was honored locally by receiving a key to the county (Cates, 2018) and nationally by receiving the US Cellular Most Valuable Coach of the year award for teaching life lessons that can be applied off the field, through football (Cates, 2016b).

## **Social Context**

The topic of any youth development project (e.g., WPD during adolescence through high school football), will impact participants, the broader community, and society at large by requiring all stakeholders to be active participants in the PYD process (Coakley, 2016). The necessary changes needed to effectively implement a PYD approach may challenge the formal logic that describes the majority of competitive youth sport today (Coakley, 2016). The complexity of adolescent development through sport described by Coakley (2016) is fitting for explaining the social context of WPD during adolescence through high school football. As a social process, for PYD through sport to attain meaningful development in student-athletes, action is required by all stakeholders over a period of time (Coakley, 2016) and the development of life skills must transfer to other domains of their lives (Pierce et al., 2017).

Defined as a set of constructive psychosocial and interpersonal assets, life skills may enable adolescents to lead healthy and productive lives (Whitley, Gould, Wright, & Hayden, 2018). Pierce et al. (2017) described life skill transfer within sport psychology as an ongoing process where the adolescent continues to develop and adopt psychosocial skills, information, personal temperament, and identity through sport leading to individual change and application to one or more life domains other than sport. Life skill development and the transfer of those personal assets may impact participants, the broader community and society at large through intentional PYD programs designed to instill character, improve core values, and encourage healthy lifestyle choices (Weiss et al., 2016).

As youth begin to engage their community with the life skills learned through PYD through sport curriculum, the people that comprise their social environment play a role in supporting the adolescents' newfound purpose. Coakley (2016) described this process as one



that may create conflict and tension because people are challenged to rethink their own ideas and provide further resources to support youth who are applying life skills in other domains of their lives. Creating and sustaining change within a community is not possible for one person, let alone one adolescent, to achieve. As youth prepare to contribute (Lerner et al., 2005) to their community and society, their personal relationships and what they experience outside of the PYD through sport-related context is critical to an ongoing positive developmental outcome (Coakley, 2016).

### **Theoretical Context**

The five Cs of PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2005; Overton, 2014) guided my study and helped to shape the understanding of WPD during adolescence through high school football. Lerner et al. developed the five Cs of PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2005; Overton, 2014) in the context of the process-relational worldview (Lerner, Hershberg, Hilliard, & Johnson, 2015; Overton, 2015a) and relational developmental systems (RDS) metatheory (Lerner, Lerner, Urban, & Zaff, 2016; Overton, 2014). The use of many views and descriptive designs for the process of becoming, holism, and relational analysis is an emphasis of the process-relational worldview (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015; Overton, 2015a). This paradigm inspired the advancement of the RDS metatheory (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015; Overton, 2014) which describes development as a melting pot of variables from various stages of human development (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015). The improvement of the process-relational worldview and RDS metatheory has been credited to many developmental scientists (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Elder, Shanahan, & Jennings, 2015; Ford & Lerner, 1992; Overton, 1973); however, Overton (2015a) is recognized as the most influential developmentalist for incorporating and covering this learning (Lerner et al., 2016).

The five Cs of PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2005; Overton, 2014) is rooted in the idea that relationships between individuals and their contexts are mutually influential (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015). To better understand what drives adolescents towards healthy developmental outcomes, Lerner et al. (2005) created the five Cs of PYD theory. To do so, Lerner et al. (2005) directed a longitudinal investigation of youth and their parents to test developmental ideas involving PYD, youth contributions to the developmental process, and their involvement in community development. For this study, the factors of the five Cs of PYD theory (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring; Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner, Lerner et al., 2015; Holt et al., 2017) were examined through the lens of WPD during adolescence through high school football. Lastly, through life skills transfer (Pierce et al., 2017; Whitley et al., 2018), and the presence of all five Cs (Lerner et al., 2005), the final component of the five Cs of PYD theory, identified as the sixth C (Agans, Vest Ettekal, Erickson, & Lerner, 2016; Bowers, Geldhof et al., 2015; Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner et al., 2017) should emerge through adolescent contributions to their communities and the institutions of civil society (Lerner, 2018).

### **Situation to Self**

I am interested in exploring how to develop the whole person during adolescence through high school football because I believe I am called to utilize high school football as a distinctive tool to model and explain the purpose of life through WPD while creating excellence and collaboration within the individuals of the program. As the human instrument (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015), I was responsible for collecting and analyzing data for my single-case study. As a qualitative researcher and primary instrument, I brought philosophical assumptions (i.e., personal beliefs; Creswell & Poth, 2018) to my study and included them into my research.

My ontological assumption of reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018) is that Jesus is the Creator of the universe and I am to follow the example of servanthood He displayed. Jesus said in Matthew 20:26-28 (New International Version), “Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” This example of servant leadership was assessed in connection with the coach-athlete relationship to determine its influence on WPD during adolescence through high school football. As a novice qualitative researcher and for this study, I was dedicated to embracing multiple realities and committed to reporting those multiple realities (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My epistemological assumption of what counts as knowledge (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and how I know reality is rooted in the Word of God. The special revelation revealed through the Bible, and general revelation through God’s created order, serve as the foundation for Christian theism (Noeble, 2006). In John 1:1, the author wrote “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Regarding my study, I gained knowledge through the subjective experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018) Coach Clark practiced with WPD during adolescence through high school football. My axiological assumption of value (Creswell & Poth, 2018) concerning an academic discipline or field of study is that it should be studied, not as an end in itself, but as a means for serving people. Mark wrote about Christ’s example in Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” For my study, I admitted the value-laden nature of the study while positioning myself within the research by including my interpretation when discussing the findings of the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Finally, my rhetoric aligned with language and communication found in qualitative studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018) that is personal and of quality form with the use of first-person voice throughout the manuscript.

The paradigm for this single-case study is social constructivism. Creswell and Poth (2018) described social constructivists as those who try to comprehend their world relative to their jobs and community. As a constructivist, I described the process of interactions between Coach Clark and other participants who have firsthand experience (e.g., former student-athletes, principal, athletic director, assistant coaches, and current parents) with how Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football at County High School. In so doing, I interpreted what Coach Clark and the other participants said, and how they interpreted their experiences to describe how Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence at County High School.

### **Problem Statement**

Adolescence is a time when youth begin the process of finding out who they are; the answer they discover is vital to lifelong psycho-social wellbeing (Arnold, 2017). Currently there are close to 1,800 juvenile offender facilities throughout the United States housing roughly 46,000 teenagers (Puzzanchera, Hockenberry, Sladky, & Kang, 2018). During the 2015–16 school year, 79% of public schools in the United States recorded that one or more incidents of violence, theft, or other crimes had taken place, amounting to 1.4 million crimes, or a rate of 28 crimes per 1,000 students enrolled (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017b). The third leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 10 and 24 is suicide, resulting in approximately 4,600 lives lost each year (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2017b). Participation in developmental activities through organizations like sports programs has

been reported to decrease adolescents' engagement in risky behaviors like carrying weapons, drug use, vehicle theft, and juvenile delinquency, while also decreasing risk factors (i.e., loneliness, poor self-esteem, hopelessness) for suicide (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014).

The problem is that while recent sport for development (SfD) research documents adult-youth relationships, acquiring life skills, providing adolescents opportunities for leadership (Agans et al., 2016; Holt et al., 2017; Vest Ettekal, Lerner, Agans, Ferris, & Burkhard, 2016), intentionality and providing a safe environment as common factors for promoting positive development in adolescents through sport (Schulenkorf, Sherry, & Rowe, 2016), there is a reported need for better consideration of the unique practices that contribute to the fulfillment of adolescent development through sport (Bean, Kramers, Forneris, & Camiré, 2018; Holt, Deal, & Smyth, 2016; Holt et al., 2017). Although SfD research has aided in closing the gap between research and practice (Whitley et al., 2019), the specific approach to delivering (Bean et al., 2018) PYD in the context of youth sport programs has yet to be clearly explained (Holt et al., 2017).

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to describe how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School. At this stage in the research, WPD during adolescence was generally defined as human development that was meant to involve all the parts (i.e., cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical) of a person. The theory guiding this study was the five Cs of PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2005), developed by Lerner, Lerner, and their colleagues (Geldhof et al., 2015; Lerner et al., 2005; Overton, 2014) as it takes a strength-based perspective regarding

adolescents as possessing resources to be developed, rather than issues to be fixed (Holsen et al., 2017; Holt et al. 2017; Lerner et al., 2017).

### **Significance of the Study**

Empirically, this study contributed to the progressing goal of PYD to move beyond a negative view of adolescents, and towards a more strength-based approach (Holsen et al., 2017; Holt et al. 2017; Lerner et al., 2017) to develop the whole adolescent while preventing negative outcomes. In an attempt to understand adolescent development in varied contexts, over the past two decades PYD has been accepted as an inventive method (Lerner, Lerner et al., 2015) and is used more often than any other technique. For example, a recent study involving an integrative review of SfD literature indicated that PYD was the most commonly used theoretical foundation across the data included in the study (Schulenkorf et al., 2016). Specifically, this study filled the gap in SfD literature by identifying and reporting the specific and unique approaches Coach Clark chose when delivering WPD in the context of high school football. Research suggests that sport has the potential to ensure positive developmental outcomes for adolescents (Strachan, McHugh, & Mason, 2018).

Theoretically, this study explored what similar studies have investigated, positive and holistic development during adolescence. For example, Holt et al. (2017) conducted a study to review and synthesize PYD in sport studies and found three characteristics of programs that support PYD in sport: “positive and sustained adult–youth relations, life skill building activities, and opportunities for youth participation in, and leadership of, community activities” (p. 3). Life skills have been identified by scholars as a range of psychosocial, behavioral, and cognitive skills defined as individual qualities (i.e., emotional control, disposition, hard work ethic, self-esteem, identity construction, and goal setting) that can be developed through sport and transferred to

other areas of life (Hayden et al., 2015; Kendellen & Camiré, 2017; Pierce et al., 2017; Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018). If properly designed, high school football could provide the three characteristics found by Holt et al. (2017) and provide youth with the necessary psychosocial skills needed to operate as and become productive members of society while offering opportunities for both PYD and WPD (Kendellen & Camiré, 2019).

The present study added to the literature a more in-depth understanding of WPD during adolescence by synthesizing the five Cs (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring) of PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2005) with the findings of the current study. This study integrated practices of PYD and SfD with WPD to provide an understanding of the unique processes for high school football coaches who apply a planned curriculum (Weiss et al., 2016) for developing the whole person during adolescence. The identification of themes from this study were aimed at improving the working conditions for and lives of high school football coaches by providing a focused and practical approach to WPD during adolescence through high school football.

Practically speaking and within the context of high school football, this study was directed to affect change in the lives of all stakeholders (i.e., student-athletes, parents, and coaches) by identifying each person's role in the mutually beneficial relationships to foster WPD during adolescence (Agans et al., 2016). For student-athletes, contribution to “family, school, and community settings or to civil society and to the institutions of democracy” (Lerner, 2018, p. 270) was a result of the study based on the attainment of the “sixth C of contribution” (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 23; Lerner, Napolitano, Boyd, Mueller, & Callina, 2014, p. 23). This study reported findings on the individual ↔ context (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015) relationship and the student-athletes' responsibility for their own development.

The coach's role in using sport as a tool for developing the whole person during adolescence is identified by scholars as a critical one (Hayden et al., 2015). For coaches who desire to fully develop the lives of student-athletes, the findings from this study provided concrete strategies for them to use when planning for WPD during adolescence (Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018). Currently, there are "few evidence-informed resources available to youth sport coaches" aimed at deliberately teaching life skills (i.e., WPD), and this study added to the existing literature by reporting the unique practices involved for high school football coaches (Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018, p. 13). The findings from this study provided practical lessons for promoting autonomy-supportive behaviors in high school football coaches, which in turn are associated with increases in student-athlete well-being and development (Vella, Gardner, & Liddle, 2016). In addition, this study reported findings for collaboration efforts required among all stakeholders.

According to Coakley (2016), "parents are ultimately responsible for fostering and advocating the development of their children" (p. 25). Within the individual ↔ context (Lerner et al., 2015) relationship between the student-athletes and their parents, this study reported findings grounded in evidence-based research for high school football coaches to use in the collaborative effort with parents to foster WPD during adolescence. As a result, parents may benefit from the research provided by the high school football coach. In the end, this study provided those who have a shared interest in adolescent development (i.e., student-athletes, parents, and coaches) with an up-to-date understanding of student-athlete experiences for improving the lives of all stakeholders and equipping them with the necessary knowledge to positively impact those they encounter during their day-to-day lives.



## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were designed to address the purpose of the study by describing how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School. Additionally, the research questions were informed by the theoretical framework of the five Cs of PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2005).

Qualitative research questions should be guided by an overarching central question (CQ) followed by several sub-questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The overarching central research question for this study was as follows:

**CQ:** How does Coach Clark address the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School?

The purpose of this question was to interpret and understand the perspectives of all participants (e.g., former student-athletes, principal, athletic director, assistant coaches, and current parents) on how Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football so that I could accurately report his unique approach. This central research question was framed around the five Cs of PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2005), and sought to understand the unique process Coach Clark used to address the development of the whole person during adolescence. Conceptualized as a holistic developmental approach, the five Cs (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring) of PYD theory have been reported as appropriate for supporting WPD in adolescents (Harwood & Johnston, 2016). The sub-questions for this qualitative study are as follows:

**Sub-question 1:** How does Coach Clark address the cognitive development of his players through high school football at County High School?

The purpose of this sub-question was to interpret and understand the perspectives of all participants on how Coach Clark addressed cognitive development during adolescence through high school football. As broad and diverse as cognitive development is, developmental scientists believe it involves changes in the way information is represented as youth develop control over their cognition, takes place in a social setting, and requires stability and plasticity (the ability to change) over a period of time (Bjorklund & Myers, 2015). Cognitive development through sport can be linked with the transfer of life skills (Hodge et al., 2016) and the final component of the five Cs of PYD theory, the sixth C, contribution (Agans et al., 2016; Bowers, Geldhof et al., 2015; Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner et al., 2017).

**Sub-question 2:** How does Coach Clark address the social development of his players through high school football at County High School?

The purpose of this sub-question was to interpret and understand the perspectives of all participants on how Coach Clark addressed social development during adolescence through high school football. Social development is a process through which adolescents acquire skills needed to effectively manage their relationships. Youth who build positive relationships based on care and concern, are able to resolve conflict in a respectful manner, and who are self-aware, display skills acquired through social development (Kendziora & Osher, 2016). Adolescent student-athletes who experience a sense of belonging as a member of a team report greater social development among other PYD related developmental outcomes (Bruner et al., 2017). The five Cs of PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2005), the process-relational worldview (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015; Overton, 2015b), and relational-developmental systems (RDS) metatheory (Lerner, et al., 2016; Overton, 2014) depict the basic developmental process as involving relations or “fusions among variables from the multiple levels of organization that comprise the ecology of

human development” (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015, p. 4). Human development involves mutually influential relations between the developing student-athlete and the multiple levels of his or her changing context (Lerner, Lerner et al., 2015).

**Sub-question 3:** How does Coach Clark address the spiritual development of his players through high school football at County High School?

The purpose of this sub-question was to interpret and understand the perspectives of all participants on how Coach Clark addressed spiritual development during adolescence through high school football. Adolescence is a sensitive stage for spiritual development (Wright, Yendork, & Kliwer, 2018) where aspects of spirituality (i.e., identity, purpose, belonging, sense of worth, capacity to care, reflectiveness, integrity) are manifested (Brandes, 2018). When student-athletes are intensely immersed in an activity they love, like playing a sport (King, Clardy, & Ramos, 2014) they share an experience larger than themselves with others. The subjective experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018) of Coach Clark aided in understanding his individual views and knowledge used for defining WPD during adolescence through high school football. Further, Patton (2015) explained that understanding what is happening to individuals (i.e., high school football coach) in a setting (i.e., high school football) and how the individuals are affected is primary for analysis.

**Sub-question 4:** How does Coach Clark address the emotional development of his players through high school football at County High School?

The purpose of this sub-question was to interpret and understand the perspectives of all participants on how Coach Clark addressed emotional development during adolescence through high school football. Emotional development is a process through which adolescents acquire skills needed to handle themselves effectively. Youth who recognize and manage their emotions

handle confrontation effectively, are able to calm themselves when angry, and display skills acquired through emotional development (Kendziora & Osher, 2016). Camiré and Kendellen (2016) reported that those who participate in high school sport demonstrate lower levels of emotional distress while experiencing increases in emotional regulation. Similarly, Gould (2016) found that when sport incorporates deliberate life skills lessons, athletes demonstrate higher levels of emotional expressiveness and regulation. Gaining specific and exhaustive insight and perceptions about the different approaches (Patton, 2015) to WPD during adolescence and the understanding of those differences for a high school football coach is useful for qualitative research questions.

**Sub-question 5:** How does Coach Clark address the physical development of his players through high school football at County High School?

The purpose of this sub-question was to interpret and understand the perspectives of all participants on how Coach Clark addressed physical development during adolescence through high school football. Adolph and Berger (2015) believe that adolescence is one of the most accelerated and exciting periods for physical growth and development. Lloyd and Oliver (2012) believe that adolescent strength and conditioning, if developmentally suitable, will promote age-appropriate physical development while also enhancing intrinsic motivation, and perceived confidence.

### **Definitions**

1. *Whole Person Development* - The whole child is defined as “intellectually active; physically, verbally, socially, and academically competent; empathetic, kind, caring, and fair; creative and curious; disciplined, self-directed, and goal-oriented; free; a critical

thinker; confident; and cared for and valued” (Kochhar-Bryant, & Heishman, 2010, p. 12).

2. *Positive Youth Development* - Positive youth development is a method to understanding youth development which proclaims that every individual can develop to their full potential when their interests, talents, and strengths align well with resources in their environment. (Lerner et al., 2017).
3. *Relational Developmental Systems* - The relational developmental systems metatheory (Lerner, et al., 2016; Overton, 2014) depicts the basic developmental process as involving interactions between various levels of organization within human development (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015) and is found in “mutually influential relations between individuals and contexts, represented as individual ↔ context relations” (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015, p. 4).
4. *National Center for Education Statistics* - The National Center for Education Statistics is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education in the U.S. and other nations (NCES, 2017a).
5. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is an organization that works to protect America from health, safety and security threats, both foreign and in the U.S. (CDC, 2017a).
6. *Sport for Development* – Sport for development has been defined as “the use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialization of children, youths and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution” (Schulenkorf et al., 2016, p. 22).

7. *National Federation of High Schools* – The National Federation of High Schools is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities providing education-based resources to help students succeed in their lives

### **Summary**

This chapter began by providing an overview of current PYD literature, a historical, social, and theoretical background for this study, and my personal motivation for studying WPD during adolescence through high school football. The need for studying WPD during adolescence through high school football exists because of the current gap in SfD literature (Whitley et al., 2019) concerning the specific factors shaping how youth sport coaches approach and deliver (Bean et al., 2018) positive and complete adolescent development. The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to describe how Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football. The practical significance of this study was to assist in affecting change in the lives of all stakeholders (i.e., student-athletes, parents, and coaches) by identifying each person's role in the mutually beneficial relationships to foster WPD during adolescence (Agans et al., 2016). Derived from the problem and purpose statements, the research questions were developed to describe how Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football at County High School. Finally, up-to-date, evidence-based literature provided support and structure for the study. The following chapter will cover the related literature for this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

This literature review provides a theoretical understanding of human development from a positive youth development (PYD) perspective as well as related literature on whole person development (WPD) during adolescence. This body of knowledge, while helpful to researchers studying adolescent development, highlights the problem and literature gap that exists concerning the specific factors shaping how youth sport coaches' approach and deliver (Bean et al., 2018) positive and complete adolescent development. The theory that guided this study was the five Cs of PYD theory developed by Lerner, Lerner, and their colleagues (Geldhof et al., 2015; Lerner et al., 2005; Overton, 2014;) as it takes a strength-based perspective regarding adolescents as possessing resources to be developed, rather than issues to be fixed (Holsen et al., 2017; Holt et al. 2017; Lerner et al., 2017).

The five Cs of PYD theory is underpinned by the process-relational worldview and the relational developmental systems (RDS) metatheory (Overton, 2015a). Within the RDS metatheory, conceptual emphasis is placed on "mutually influential relations between individuals and contexts, represented as individual ↔ context relations" (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015, p. 4). The related literature section of this chapter is organized in such a way to provide the reader with a tight synthesis of the existing knowledge by developing three PYD related literature concepts (i.e., coach-athlete relationships, life skill building activities, opportunities for leadership). Further, within each concept, I synthesized the literature and reported each concept's connection to the context of high school football. Taking those three concepts and their relevance to high school football into consideration, I intentionally concluded the related literature section with my topic by connecting the components of WPD (cognitive, social,

spiritual, emotional, and physical development) with the five Cs (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring) of the PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2005).

### **Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework is a guide employed to build and support a study by providing philosophical, epistemological, methodological, and analytical approaches to structure the entire dissertation. Consisting of a selected theory or theories with relevant concepts and definitions, the theoretical framework provides a common worldview or lens to support the researcher's understanding and plan for researching a particular topic (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). I examined how the phenomenon, WPD during adolescence, relates to the process-relational worldview and relational-developmental systems (RDS) metatheory (Overton, 2015a) of which the theory for this study (five Cs of PYD theory) was constructed and which was used to frame this inquiry.

The process-relational worldview focuses on process, becoming, holism, relational analysis, and the use of multiple perspectives and multiple explanatory forms (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015; Overton, 2015a). From this worldview, the RDS metatheory was derived (Lerner, et al., 2016; Overton, 2014) which depicts the basic developmental process as involving relations or “fusions among variables from the multiple levels of organization that comprise the ecology of human development” (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015, p. 4). The concept of an RDS-based theory is found in “mutually influential relations between individuals and contexts, represented as individual ↔ context relations” (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015, p. 4). Although many scholars (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Elder et al., 2015; Ford & Lerner, 1992; Overton, 1973) have contributed to the progress of the process-relational worldview and RDS metatheory, Overton (2015) has been the most influential for “integrating and extending this scholarship” (Lerner et al., 2016, p. 176).



The five Cs of PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2005; Overton, 2014), developed by Lerner, Lerner, and their colleagues (Geldhof et al., 2015; Lerner et al., 2005) is underpinned by the individual ↔ context RDS conception (Lerner, Lerner et al., 2015). The developers of the five Cs of PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2005) conducted the 4-H study to gather evidence about variables that create PYD and the workings of the adolescent developmental system that blend to increase the likelihood of PYD. The study was named “The 4-H study of PYD” because it was supported in part by a grant from the National 4-H Council (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 18). The National 4-H Council is America’s largest youth development organization and is founded on educating the head, heart, and hands (National 4-H Council, 2019). As described by Lerner et al. (2005), the 4-H study was “interested in understanding what propels the young person along a healthy developmental trajectory” (p. 25). The factors of the five Cs of PYD theory (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring; Holt et al., 2017; Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner, Lerner et al., 2015) were linked to the phenomenon, WPD during adolescence, for this study. Competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring revealed commonalities in WPD, enabling practitioners of WPD during adolescence to better understand this phenomenon.

Throughout the adolescent stage of human development, support for the five Cs of PYD theory was provided by means of the 4-H study data set (Bowers et al., 2010; Lerner et al., 2005; Phelps et al., 2009). For example, from grade 5 through 7 of the 4-H study, Phelps et al. (2009) evaluated the theory and offered evidence of a latent (i.e., present and capable of emerging) construct of PYD that was transferable during the early years of adolescent development and which could be expressed by the five Cs of PYD theory. Those results were expanded when Bowers et al. (2010) demonstrated similarities between the constructs of the early (grades 5 through 7) and middle (grades 8 through 10) years of adolescence. However, for two of the Cs

(competence and confidence), the measurement scales were slightly different based on the developmental change occurring during middle adolescence (Bowers et al., 2010).

Reviews of adolescent development literature indicated research studies conducted on adolescent development are prevalent and include specialists who take both intentional and unintentional approaches (Bean et al., 2018; Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018; Turnnidge, Côté, & Hancock, 2014). Using the five Cs of PYD theory, Strachan et al. (2018) investigated how PYD through sport was understood and experienced by urban indigenous youth. In their study, Strachan et al. (2018) hypothesized that each C was a unique factor in the development and growth of the adolescent. The findings of their study added to the literature on WPD during adolescence from a cultural perspective. For example, Strachan et al. (2018) reported the significance of understanding the five Cs for individual cultures and working to intentionally deliver a PYD program suited to meet the particular needs of a society.

Of all the PYD theories, the five Cs of PYD theory has perhaps received “the most consistent empirical support” (Geldhof et al., 2015, p. 162). The five Cs of PYD theory provides “an opportunity to assess specific developmental areas” based on terms used by those who hold the greatest influence on WPD during adolescence (i.e., youth, parents, and practitioners; Geldhof et al., 2015, p. 173). The levels of adolescent change identified by Lerner, Lerner et al. (2015), range “from the physical and physiological, through the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral, and to the social, relational, and institutional” (p. 613). For this study, WPD during adolescence was comprised of the following developmental components: (a) Cognitive, (b) Social, (c) Spiritual, (d) Emotional, and (e) Physical. Spirituality is a component that supports an adolescent’s psychological development by providing a framework for overall health and well-being (Harley & Hunn, 2015) and is necessary for exploring WPD. Although the relational and

institutional levels of adolescent change were not included as developmental components of WPD, they were discussed in relation to their impact on WPD through the coach-athlete relationships and the environment youth sport coaches create for their student-athletes. The five Cs of PYD theory is fitting when considering how this study explored how a high school football coach specifically uses high school football to develop the whole student-athlete during adolescence.

### **Related Literature**

There have been numerous studies and interventions designed by scholars and experts over the past thirty plus years to discover how to most effectively promote the positive development of adolescents (Bowers, Johnson, Warren, Tirrell, & Lerner, 2015). Throughout recent PYD literature, scholars have identified the following “Big Three” (Agans et al., 2016, p. 35; Holt et al., 2017, p.3; Lerner et al., 2017, p. 609; Vest Ettekal et. al., 2016, p. 71) characteristics as necessary for supporting and promoting PYD: positive adult–youth relationships, teaching and building life skills, and opportunities for leadership (Agans et al., 2015; Agans et al., 2016; Holt et al., 2017; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). Regardless of the context, one of the foremost resources for positively developing adolescents while decreasing risk behaviors is relationships with committed and caring adults (Bowers, Johnson et al., 2015). Identified by scholars as adult-youth relations (Bowers, Johnson et al., 2015; Holt et al. 2017; Lerner, Lerner et al., 2015; Pierce, Gould, & Camiré, 2017; Whitley et al., 2019), these relationships between adults and youth are critical to the developmental outcomes of adolescents. Specialists label these types of connections as developmental relationships where adults and youth engage in bidirectional relations towards adolescent growth, learning, and development (Pekel et al., 2018).

Developmental relationships require the adult to express care (Pekel et al., 2018) toward the adolescent for the purpose of establishing an emotional attachment (Bowers, Johnson et al., 2015; Li & Julian, 2012;). Once the connection is entrenched, the adult is tasked with challenging and providing support (Pekel et al., 2018) to assure a collaborative effort is taking place where youth progress to more complex patterns of behavior while participating in their own development. During this collaborative effort, a shift in power occurs where youth begin to guide the relationship and move from being a participant, to a producer of their own development (Bowers, Johnson et al., 2015; Li & Julian, 2012). As youth progress through the developmental relationship and begin the process of producing their own development, adults aid in expanding the possibilities for youth by making connections with others to further their development (Pekel et al., 2018). Although parents are most frequently a young person's primary and most prominent relationship (Bowers, Johnson et al., 2015), for the purpose of this study, I review related literature on the other primary type of adult-youth relationships, mentors (Bowers, Johnson et al., 2015; Li & Julian, 2012; Pekel et al., 2018), and in particular, the coach-athlete relationship.

### **Coach-Athlete Relationships**

In some instances, the coach-athlete relationship is the first experience youth have with an adult who believes in them and their potential (Whitley, Massey, & Wilkison, 2018). For example, positive relationships between coaches and athletes are associated with many positive developmental outcomes including but not limited to higher perceived competence, prosocial norms, and lower stress (Cairney, Clark, Kwan, Bruner, & Tamminen, 2018). As previously discussed, developmental relationships, including the coach-athlete relationship, are a reciprocal process rather than a one-way line of communication (Yang & Jowett, 2017). Defined as a

situation where coaches' and athletes' feelings, thoughts, and behaviors are collectively and causally unified, the quality of the coach-athlete relationship is expressed through four key interdependent relational constructs: closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation (Jowett & Shanmugam, 2016; Yang & Jowett, 2017).

Closeness is an affectional bond established between coaches and athletes who display shared trust, caring, respect, appreciation, and interpersonal liking. Commitment, on the part of the coach and athlete, is a time-consuming endeavor requiring an ongoing pursuit of closeness (i.e., trust, caring, respect, and appreciation) over the long term (Jowett & Shanmugam, 2016; Yang & Jowett, 2017). Complementarity demonstrates the level of cooperation desirable for the coach and athlete to interact (Jowett, & Shanmugam, 2016). For example, Yang and Jowett (2017) described two different complementary behaviors as (a) being pleasant, responsive, and prepared, while (b) accepting and executing their specific role in the relationship. Finally, co-orientation is seen through interdependent feelings, thoughts, and behaviors connecting the coach and athlete to a mutual understanding about their individual roles within the relationship (Yang & Jowett, 2017). Coaches who successfully model closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation with their athletes are more likely to receive the same from youth who will in turn increase their chances of positive developmental outcomes as a result (Jowett & Shanmugam, 2016).

To this point, the empirical findings have shown positive developmental outcomes from coach-athlete relationships. However, unlike coaches who intentionally develop positive relationships with their athletes, obsessive passionate coaches are more likely to exhibit a negative, controlling, and intimidating coaching style (Jowett, & Shanmugam, 2016). Researchers have found that youth coaches who place an emphasis on winning while comparing

adolescents to others produce negative developmental outcomes like poor sportsmanship, anxiety, conflict, and stress (Cairney et al., 2018). Negative outcomes associated with coach-athlete relationships lack closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation resulting in relationship conflict, animosity, and dissension (Yang & Jowett, 2017). Youth coaches who employ a controlling behavioral style have a negative impact on adolescents making them feel fearful, distressed, anxious and intimidated (Jowett & Shanmugam, 2016).

Youth coaches are leaders of adolescents who play a significant role in the development of young people (Lee, Hwang, & Choi, 2017) and who provide an environment that can encourage or discourage adolescent prosperity (Wray-Lake, Syvertsen, & Flanagan, 2016). No matter the style of leadership chosen, an effective leader has a desire for power (Burton, Welty Peachey, & Damon, 2018). What differentiates high school football coaches from one another is how they use the power that comes from their position to steward the lives of those who have been entrusted to them. There are various styles of leadership which can be connected with the approaches taken by high school football coaches.

**Transformational leadership.** Transformational leaders make use of charisma, passion and enthusiasm to stimulate and inspire followers to develop their own leadership capacity (Hoffner, 2018), by being responsive to their higher-order psychological needs (Burton et al., 2018). Sports psychology researchers report that transformational leadership in coaching is connected with improved development, higher levels of motivation, reduced aggression, increased well-being, fulfillment, and a willingness to make individual sacrifices for the good of the group (Ekstrand et al., 2018). Transformational coaches use their power to come alongside players to help them develop by placing the needs of student-athletes first and the team second (Ehrmann, Ehrmann, & Jordan, 2011). The idea of transformational leadership was first

introduced over 40 years ago by Burns (1978) as transforming leadership. Burns' (1978) introduction of transforming leadership inspired Bass (1985) to rename this style of leadership to transformational and to develop a more refined transformational/transactional leadership model (Burton et al., 2018). From these efforts, Bass (1985) identified transformational leadership as having the following four domains: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Idealized influence is commonly characterized among scholars as leadership behaviors that stress trust, ethics, and values by leaders who accept responsibility for the performance outcomes (Burton et al., 2018; Doucet, Fredette, Simard, & Tremblay, 2015; Prochazka, Gilova, & Vaculik, 2017). Doucet et al. (2015) noted that followers identify with leaders who have an idealized influence as an example to be emulated because the leader does more than is required for the good of the group. The influence coaches have over an adolescent's life is second only to their parents' (Ehrmann et al., 2011), and coaches who are trustworthy and honest may aid in promoting positive developmental outcomes through an idealized influence (Côté & Erickson, 2016). For example, a high school football coach who has an idealized influence creates an atmosphere where the coach-athlete relationship is positively developed based on the intrinsic rewards of being a member of the team.

Inspirational motivation depicts how leaders create and communicate an optimistic vision of the future and inspire others to accomplish it (Arthur & Lynn, 2017). Leaders who inspire and motivate others do not just develop and articulate the vision; they set clear expectations and demonstrate their level of commitment by how they work with their team towards the shared vision (Burton et al., 2018). By giving purpose to the vision, leaders motivate (Doucet et al., 2015) and energize followers based on their convictions and efforts (Prochazka et al., 2017). For

example, high school football coaches who set relatable visions, provide constructive feedback in an enthusiastic and optimistic way, and who work alongside their student-athletes may inspire them to give their very best effort towards the overall vision of the team.

Intellectual stimulation fosters creativity and innovation (Burton et al., 2018; Doucet et al., 2015). Leaders who intellectually stimulate their team members rarely criticize them and instead encourage them to think on their own (Burton et al., 2018). Intellectually stimulating leaders provide ideas to support rethinking (Arthur & Lynn, 2017), encourage participation to help solve problems, and solicit team members' ideas and thoughts (Prochazka et al., 2017) for improving their group. For example, a high school football coach may develop a leadership committee consisting of student-athletes who are responsible for working together to brainstorm ideas for improving the overall program, and who will support their innovative suggestions.

Leaders who apply individualized consideration create and provide a supportive environment based on the needs of their followers' growth and development (Burton et al., 2018). These types of leaders provide personal attention and seek to understand the needs of their followers while working with them to develop their full potential (Arthur & Lynn, 2017). To achieve this, leaders must first listen to their followers and then design proper activities to fit their individual needs (Prochazka et al., 2017). For example, high school football coaches who delegate assignments to provide individualized learning opportunities for their student-athletes employ individualized consideration.

Collectively, these four elements (i.e., idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) of the coach–athlete relationship contribute to the overall transformational results experienced through athletics (Côté & Erickson, 2016). In the end, transformational leaders are interested in growing and developing their



followers (Burton et al., 2018) by challenging them to go beyond their own self-interests for the good of the group (Arthur & Lynn, 2017). Recent research shows that leaders who display transformational leadership are thought to be more effective than others with varying approaches (Loughead & Bloom, 2016). Prior to a discussion of transactional leadership, there is a need to briefly identify leaders who misuse the actions of transformational leaders to feed their own egotisms and status. These types of leaders, pseudo-transformational leaders, are those who encourage and demand unconditional loyalty, forcing followers to rely on them (Burton et al., 2018). This type of leadership may lead to compliance and submission from subordinates (Lin, Huang, Chen, & Huang, 2017).

**Transactional leadership.** With an emphasis on rules and procedures (Burton et al., 2018), transactional leaders motivate by establishing relationships where followers receive praise and rewards in exchange for good effort and performance (Doucet et al., 2015). On the other hand, if followers have poor effort or performance, transactional leaders distribute punishment to correct behaviors (Loughead, & Bloom, 2016). Based on the actions of followers, this reward and discipline procedure is the foundation of transactional leadership (Ekstrand et al., 2018). These exchanges of rewards and services satisfy the self-interests of the leader and the follower (Loughead & Bloom, 2016). However, transactional coaches use their power to meet their own needs first and the needs of student-athletes last (Ehrmann et al., 2011). Transactional leadership includes the following four domains: contingent reward, active management by exception, passive management by exception, and laissez-faire (Burton et al., 2018).

Contingent rewards are benefits received after successful completion of a task (Burton et al., 2018). Although completely different from the support experienced from those who are exposed to transformational leadership, contingent rewards offer followers the perception of

being supported (Arthur & Lynn, 2017). Identified by scholars as an extrinsic factor, contingent rewards could possibly weaken motivation, participation, and enjoyment in athletics (Ryan & Deci, 2017). For example, high school football coaches who only apply this domain of transactional leadership will alienate some players who are incapable of performing at the same level of other student-athletes.

Active management by exception is an approach leaders use when looking for mistakes (Burton et al., 2018). Leaders look for changes from the normal way of doing tasks and make corrections (Arthur & Lynn, 2017). The emphasis for leaders who actively manage by exception is on the shortcomings and errors of those who follow (Doucet et al., 2015). An example of a high school football coach who actively manages by exception would be when he inspects the setup for a football game, notices items out of place, and then sees to it that the items are correctly positioned before the start of the game.

Passive management by exception simply waits for mistakes to occur and only addresses the issues when they can no longer be ignored (Holtz & Hu, 2017). As a behavioral characteristic of transactional leaders (Wells & Welty Peachey, 2016), Burton et al. (2018) reported that passive management by exception uses more corrective behaviors. Using the example from active management, an example of passive management by exception for high school football coaches would be a coach who is not concerned with the details of how the field is set up and does not address any issues unless they are brought to his attention.

Laissez-faire leadership is characterized by leaders who are disengaged, and absent by not taking action or making any decisions (Arthur & Lynn, 2017; Burton et al., 2018). Laissez-faire coaching is normally evident when coaches offer little to no organization or structure and are lenient towards their athletes (Gilchrist & Mallett, 2017). Furthermore, coaches who are

hesitant to take action, pass off their responsibilities to assistants and fail to express their opinions or use their power when needed are characterized as laissez-faire coaches (Stebbins & Taylor, 2017). High school football coaches who do not have a purpose for their program, do not meet regularly with their staff to communicate, and who are disconnected from their players would be examples of laissez-faire coaches. The following style of leadership, servant leadership, has been categorized as a domain of positive leadership along with transformational leadership (Burton et al., 2018).

**Servant leadership.** Servant leaders place the ambitions, desires, and interests of others before their own (Greenleaf, 1977), are attentive to the needs of those who choose to follow, show concern for them, and are committed to their development (Burton et al., 2018). Often connected to transformational leadership, servant leadership is a distinct form of leadership where leaders seek to serve by empowering personal growth in those who choose to follow before meeting the goals and objectives of the group (Burton et al., 2018). This style of leadership is evident when followers experience a positive transformation in numerous developmental areas (i.e., cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical) while becoming servant leaders themselves (Greenleaf, 1977). The idea of servant leadership is extensively ascribed to Robert K. Greenleaf (Burton, Welty Peachey, & Wells, 2017; Kim, Kim, & Won, 2018; Robinson, Neubert, & Miller, 2018; Schary, 2017) who believed it began with a desire to serve others (Greenleaf, 1977). This altruistic calling underpins the behaviors and characteristics of all servant leaders, motivating them to promote the well-being of others before themselves (Robinson et al., 2018). Servant leadership includes six characteristics as outlined in Van Dierendonck's (2011) model of servant leadership: empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship.

Servant leaders develop people by encouraging and empowering them to identify and solve problems (Robinson et al., 2018). When followers successfully identify problems and determine the very best way to fulfill their responsibilities (Kim et al., 2018), they produce self-confidence and experience a sense of personal power (Burton et al., 2018; Van Dierendonck, 2011; Welty Peachey, Burton, Wells, & Chung, 2018). For this to occur, servant leaders must be able to recognize and acknowledge followers' abilities and what they are able to learn (Welty Peachey et al., 2018). For high school football coaches, empowering and developing adolescent student-athletes may include creating a committee of players who are tasked with identifying issues of concern while working to creatively address and resolve them.

Humility on the part of servant leaders requires them to keep their own achievements and abilities in perspective (Burton et al., 2017). Not to be confused with a lack of self-confidence, servant leaders who display humility are willing to understand who they are, acknowledge their advantages and disadvantages, and prioritize the needs of others above their own (Robinson et al., 2018). By doing so, they acknowledge and benefit from the knowledge of others, and, consequently, ask for follower input (Burton et al., 2018). When success is experienced, humble servant leaders do not take sole credit (Burton et al., 2017; Van Dierendonck, 2011); instead, they acknowledge and praise the contribution of others. Humility among coaches may go against the inclination in sports to promote oneself and act only in one's best interest (Robinson et al., 2018). An example of a high school football coach who displays humility could be one who accepts constructive criticism, applies feedback, and is motivated for all team members to benefit from the success of the team.

Servant leaders who model authenticity are genuine and present the truest version of themselves (Kiersch & Peters, 2017) in every aspect of their life (Wells & Welty Peachey, 2016).

By being honest with themselves and with others, servant leaders who display authenticity are willing to be vulnerable (Schary, 2017) and are committed to fulfilling their obligations (Wells & Welty Peachey 2016). Within an organizational setting, authenticity is indicative of people who place their roles as a servants over their professional roles as a leaders (Van Dierendonck, 2011). For example, a high school football coach who is genuinely committed to serving his student-athletes by placing their needs above his own would be a leader who exhibits authenticity.

Servant leaders foster an atmosphere of interpersonal acceptance by establishing trusting relationships allowing followers to feel safe and confident in their respective roles (Welty Peachey et al., 2018). This feeling of safety creates an environment where followers are able to give their best effort without fear of ridicule or condemnation (Burton et al., 2018). When failure occurs, leaders who have formed interpersonal acceptance are able to show compassion and empathy while identifying with the feelings of others (Van Dierendonck, 2011). High school football coaches who make interpersonal acceptance a priority are not outcome-focused, but rather process-focused. For example, anyone can tell a student-athlete the obvious: you missed the tackle, you dropped the ball, or you fumbled, but coaches who foster interpersonal acceptance provide specific corrective feedback and encourage adolescent athletes to try again while assuring them of their ability.

By clearly demonstrating what is expected (Van Dierendonck, 2011), servant leaders provide direction centered on the needs, abilities, and input of followers (Welty Peachey et al., 2018). Servant leaders also provide direction by holding followers accountable for their role in accomplishing tasks for the group (Burton et al., 2018). Including followers helps to create other ways to deal with challenges (Welty Peachey et al., 2018) while creating ownership among the group. While setting, communicating, and maintaining a customized vision for the group,

servant leaders adapt their programs and strategies regularly (Wells & Welty Peachey 2016). For example, high school football coaches who are able to annually adjust their program plans based on the current group of student-athletes provide direction and accountability centered on the current group of players as opposed to those who have graduated and moved on.

With a focus on service over control, stewardship is a characteristic of servant leaders who are willing to take responsibility for the entire group (Robinson et al., 2018) while serving as role models for those who choose to follow (Kiersch & Peters, 2017; Schary, 2017). Setting the example for followers, servant leaders are able to motivate others to act in the shared interest of the group (Van Dierendonck, 2011). As a model for stewardship, servant leaders place the interests of individuals within the group over their own and are able to develop cooperation, social responsibility, and loyalty among followers (Burton et al., 2017). High school football coaches who are willing to come alongside their student-athletes and participate with them in doing what has been asked of the group (e.g., keeping the facilities clean, using appropriate language, being on time and prepared) would demonstrate stewardship through servant leadership.

In contrast with other leadership styles, opposed to being placed at the top of the hierarchy, servant leaders place themselves at the bottom (Kim, Kim, & Wells, 2017). The major difference between servant leadership and other styles of leadership is the emphasis on followers' needs and their personal development (Burton et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2018; Welty Peachey et al., 2018; Schary, 2017). The positive impact experienced by student-athletes who are guided by servant leaders exceeds those who are led by non-servant leader coaches (Robinson et al., 2018). For example, coaches who take a servant leadership approach may produce student-athletes who have higher levels of intrinsic motivation, are more

satisfied, are more self-confident, and exhibit better coping skills than those guided by coaches who use a non-servant leadership style of coaching (Hammermeister et al., 2008). As a result, an expected outcome for student-athletes who experience a coach who adopts a servant leadership style of coaching is self-actualization (Burton et al., 2018). In addition to positive and sustained adult-youth relationships, another essential characteristic to fostering PYD is life skill development (Vest Ettekal et al., 2016).

### **Life Skill Building Activities**

In sport psychology literature, life skills have been recognized as a variety of internal personal assets and characteristics such as behavioral, cognitive, psychosocial, and physical skills (Bean et al., 2018; Gould & Carson, 2008; Holt et al., 2017; Kendellen & Camiré, 2019; Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018). Given the variety of existing definitions for life skills (Hodge et al., 2016), there is a comprehensive conceptual framework for life skills interventions advanced by Hodge, Danish, and Martin (2013), incorporating descriptions from pertinent sport psychology literature to link those findings to WPD during adolescence through high school football. In the conceptual model for life skills interventions, Hodge et al. (2013) advocated for the integration of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness with a needs-supportive motivational climate. For this study, the needs-supportive motivational climate was dependent upon the coach-athlete relationship and the type of leadership style utilized (Hodge et al., 2016). It is reported that coaches who are needs-supportive create an environment for motivating and nurturing their student-athletes' autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Van Puyenbroeck, Stouten, & Vande Broek, 2017).

Bean et al. (2018) presented a continuum of life skills development and transfer through sport in which they recommended that after coaches create an environment where student-

athletes feel safe, secure, and significant (i.e., provide a needs-supportive motivational climate), they should discuss the concepts of life skills with their players first and then proceed by practicing life skills. In regards to discussing life skills, Bean et al. (2018) recommended defining, talking about the importance of, enhancing confidence for, and enabling reflection on life skill development within the sport context. When it comes to practicing life skills through sport, Bean et al. (2018) suggested intentionally creating opportunities for, and enabling student-athletes to reflect on applying life skills. The three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness reported by Hodge et al. (2013) can be connected with the continuum of life skills development presented by Bean et al. (2018) and linked to WPD during adolescence through high school football.

**Autonomy.** Adolescents who develop autonomy are proficient in exercising and expressing their own abilities to problem solve and cope with the demands of life (Hodge et al., 2016). Coaches who offer student-athletes potential outcomes for choices made, provide decision-making options, and create ownership in their learning process support autonomy (Van Puyenbroeck et al., 2017). Discussing with student-athletes prior to practice the similarities between managing the stress and emotions experienced during practice and game situations with the stressful conditions felt while preparing for and taking final exams is an approach a high school football coach who promotes autonomy through life skill-building activities could take. To enhance student-athletes' confidence with the life skill building activity mentioned, coaches should encourage their players when they encounter moments of stress throughout a practice or game while reinforcing good decision-making when they effectively handle the stressful situation. Enabling reflection (Bean et al., 2018) should be time allocated during travel time for away games, pre-game meals, or towards the end of practice (Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018)



when high school football coaches allow athletes to share and assess their experiences with managing the stress and emotions of being both a high school football player and a high school student.

An intentional approach to practicing stress management and emotional regulation (Bean et al., 2018) through high school football may include allowing student-athletes to run through breathing exercises (i.e., taking deep breaths in the nose and exhaling out the mouth) after placing them in a stressful situation during practice. Once players have been provided concrete opportunities to explicitly practice (Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018) managing stress through high school football practices and games, coaches are encouraged to allow time for student-athletes to reflect on the application of those skills (Kendellen & Camiré, 2019) by asking open-ended questions. For example, high school football coaches may ask their players why they believe taking the time to practice their breathing during a stressful practice or game time situation is helpful, and then follow that by asking how they believe taking the same approach in other aspects of their life may help. By having specific discussions (Trottier & Robitaille, 2014) before, during, and after the practicing of autonomy-based life skills (e.g., emotional control, stress management), high school football players may experience positive independent thinking, self-control and regulation as they begin to direct themselves through the autonomy learning process. In addition to autonomy, Hodge et al. (2013) reported competence as a basic psychological need, which can connect with the Bean et al. (2018) continuum of life skills development while linking those discoveries with WPD during adolescence through high school football.

**Competence.** Hodge et al. (2016) suggested competence as being both interpersonal (i.e., productive in continuous social exchanges), and intrapersonal (i.e., applying one's

capacities through autonomous behavior) dimensions of effectiveness experienced by individuals on a consistent basis. Coaches who develop an organized environment for learning by clearly communicating team goals and guidelines, and who provide constructive feedback will support competence in their student-athletes (Van Puyenbroeck et al., 2017). One of the characteristics of coaches who support life skill building is discussing the impact (Bean et al., 2018) of verbal and non-verbal forms of interpersonal communication (Kendellen & Camiré, 2017) with student-athletes. For example, high school football coaches who initiate discussions by providing examples of teammates who have great body language (i.e., smiling, clapping, and bouncing around) versus those who have poor body language (i.e., dragging their feet, head down, shoulders slumped) may arouse an interest in interpersonal communication among players. To increase the confidence of players' (Bean et al., 2018) interpersonal communication skills, coaches should praise players who effectively communicate team strategies during a practice or game scenario while also acknowledging the relevance of being an effective communicator in life (Kendellen & Camiré, 2017). Allowing players time to reflect (Bean et al., 2018) in small groups during bus rides to away games (Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018) about how the words they use while communicating with teammates makes them feel, and how to be more understanding of the impact this has on others (Kendellen & Camiré, 2017) may lead to an improved awareness of how they can best communicate at home, school, and in their communities (Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018).

Being intentional about practicing (Bean et al., 2018) assertive ways to communicate in a high school football setting may include coaches who ask student-athletes their opinions during a timeout and when players exercise their competence by communicating with coaches their views on the situation. By providing opportunities for players to intentionally practice (Pierce,

Kendellen et al., 2018) their interpersonal communication (Kendellen & Camiré, 2017), through the high school football setting, coaches who facilitate competence through life skill-building activities create time for peer debriefing (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015). For example, after viewing practice or game film, high school football coaches may allow 5-10 minutes for players to discuss ways they effectively used non-verbal communication (i.e., hand signals) and areas they could improve upon, and conclude by offering players five minutes to discuss the application of interpersonal communication with their teachers and administrators in a school setting. Discussing and practicing competence-based life skills (i.e., interpersonal communication) through the high school football setting may lead to student-athlete development in areas like problem solving and self-learning. Along with autonomy and competence, Hodge et al. (2013) reported relatedness as a basic psychological need. Relatedness can be connected with the continuum of life skills development reported by Bean et al. (2018) and those results can be attached to WPD during adolescence through high school football.

**Relatedness.** Adolescents who believe they have a place with others and their community through mutually caring relationships experience relatedness (Hodge et al., 2016). Coaches who develop relationships with student-athletes grounded in support and respect and who make players feel as if they are an integral part of the team will foster relatedness (Van Puyenbroeck et al., 2017). Having an open dialogue with student-athletes (Bean et al., 2018) about how to effectively cooperate with others on a high school football team while relating those approaches to cooperating with parents, friends, classmates, and teachers would promote relatedness as a life skill. To build a player's confidence (Bean et al., 2018) to cooperate with others, coaches should reassure their players (Trottier & Robitaille, 2014) when they struggle with their cooperation and reinforce (Bean et al., 2018) moments when they exhibit flexibility

and teamwork. At the conclusion of practice (Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018), coaches could provide a time for student-athletes to reflect (Bean et al., 2018) and share specific instances during practice when they observed a teammate exhibiting cooperation.

Intentionally creating an opportunity to practice (Bean et al., 2018) cooperation with others in a high school football setting may be facilitated by coaches who explicitly structure their practice schedule (Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018) to include moments when players are faced with supporting their teammates or being selfish. After players have experienced a situation during practice when they are able to exhibit cooperation through teamwork, high school football coaches could provide their student-athletes with questions to discuss and record in a journal (Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018). The following are some examples of questions high school football coaches could use to encourage discussion:

- What are some examples of how our team worked together this week?
- What role did you play in cooperating with your teammates?
- Who did you observe this week being a great teammate, and what did he do to be such a great teammate?

High school football coaches who assist student-athletes in acquiring relatedness based life skills through journaling, discussing, and practicing cooperation will promote their players' consideration of others' feelings, and increase their social interest and responsibility (Hodge et al., 2013).

For all life skills programs, these central psychological aspects (i.e., autonomy, competence, relatedness) are believed to help people reach their full potential while promoting positive psychosocial development (Hodge et al., 2013). Agans et al. (2015) believe that organized sport may provide opportunities for learning life skills. Research also suggests that

sport provides exposure to lived experiences that could lead to student-athletes learning life skills (Camiré & Kendellen, 2016; Holt et al., 2017; Kendellen & Camiré, 2019). Coupled with positive and sustained adult-youth relations, and life skill building activities, the final characteristic of the “Big Three” (Agans et al., 2016, p. 35; Holt et al., 2017, p.3; Lerner et al., 2017, p. 609; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016, p. 71), opportunities for leadership, will be discussed in connection with WPD during adolescence through high school football.

### **Opportunities for Leadership**

Sport psychologists characterize youth leadership as a life skill that may be developed through sport (Gould, 2016; Hayden et al., 2015; Kendellen & Camiré, 2017; Pierce et al., 2017). In fact, while discussing what coaches consider one of the most important life skills to develop in their student-athletes, Gould (2016) reported leadership as a life skill that adolescent athletes must obtain and develop. Furthermore, Gould (2016), identified youth leadership as a multifaceted developmental process requiring the interaction of established leaders (i.e., high school football coach), willing participants (i.e., high school football players), and situations for influencing (i.e., high school football strength training class, practice, and games) over a period of time. Seemiller (2018) created a holistic youth leadership competency model and suggested four domains (interpersonal, intrapersonal, societal, and strategic) of competency for those beginning a youth leadership program design. Although the proposed study is not intended to specifically explore an adolescent leadership program, Seemillers’ (2018) model can be used to identify commonalities among the four domains of the leadership model: interpersonal (i.e., communication), intrapersonal (i.e., personal contribution), societal (i.e., competence in social exchanges), and strategic (i.e., problem solving and decision making) with the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness identified earlier through the

conceptual model for life skills intervention presented by Hodge et al. (2013). Team captains and peer mentoring (Agans et al., 2015) are leadership opportunities high school football coaches could use for developing the whole person during adolescence.

**Team captains.** Together, high school sport-governing bodies (i.e., NFHS, Michigan High School Athletic Association, Sport Psychology Professionals, Student-Advisory Council, Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, and community partners) developed an online educational leadership program for high school student-athletes and labeled it the “Captain’s Course” (Pierce, Blanton et al., 2018, p. 24). This online course is free (NFHS, 2019a) and is founded on five pillars of leadership (positive peer modeling, communication, motivation, team cohesion, and how to handle tough leadership situations; Pierce, Blanton et al., 2018). In addition to those five pillars, the course provides an introduction to leadership, discusses student-athletes’ identity, leadership style, roles and responsibilities, and a review of leadership (NFHS, 2019a). Sport psychologists agree that coaches who take an intentional and explicit approach to developing team captains support the development of adolescents’ leadership skills (Agans et al., 2015; Gould, 2016; Pierce, Blanton et al., 2018; Santos, Strachan, Gould, Pereira, & Machado, 2019).

High school football coaches who desire to develop captains on their team could begin by requiring identified sophomore and junior players to complete the captain’s course during the off season. Throughout the course, high school football coaches could familiarize themselves with the captain’s course coach facilitator guide (NFHS, 2019b) and be prepared to ask their student-athletes open-ended questions after each unit. For example, coaches could ask their players to think back on examples from the communication unit, and describe ways they communicate effectively, and what parts of their communication need improvement (NFHS, 2019b). Upon

successful completion of the course, high school football coaches could delegate tough leadership situations (i.e., organizing community service events) to players providing them the following opportunities: (a) communicate with community organizations regarding the types of services needed, (b) communicate with teammates and organize volunteers, (c) motivate teammates who have yet to volunteer, and (d) create team cohesion through the entire process. One of the pillars of leadership identified in the captain's course, positive peer modeling (NFHS, 2019a; Pierce, Blanton et al., 2018), has been identified as an opportunity for developing adolescent leadership through sport (Agans et al., 2015).

**Peer mentoring.** Involving adolescents in real leadership experiences (i.e., peer mentoring) will help develop youth leadership (Gould, 2016). Upon successful completion of the captain's course discussed in the previous section, to facilitate positive peer modeling (Pierce, Blanton et al., 2018), high school football coaches could allow upperclassmen to lead peer debriefing sessions with younger players (Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018) who are enrolled in the online course. In addition, the NFHS hosts annual leadership programs (i.e., National Student Leadership Summit) with the intention of developing student-athletes' leadership abilities while communicating to participants their potential for influence over their communities, school, and teams (NFHS, 2019c). By supporting student-athletes' attendance at this event, high school football coaches could provide their players with an opportunity to further develop their leadership skills while helping them move outside their leadership comfort zone (Gould, 2016) by exposing them to an environment for peer mentoring other than their high school football program and teammates.

So far, there are findings from PYD related literature for upholding and encouraging PYD through the coach-athlete relationship, building life skills, and leadership opportunities for

student-athletes while making connections to approaches high school football coaches may take to foster WPD during adolescence through high school football. In addition, WPD and its components (cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical) can be related to the five Cs (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring) of PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2005).

### **Whole Person Development**

WPD is composed of its parts and their complex dynamic interrelations (Witherington, 2017). According to Lerner, Lerner et al. (2015), “the whole exists as an organized and self-organizing system of parts, each defined by its relations to other parts and to the whole itself” (p. 633). The whole child is defined as “intellectually active; physically, verbally, socially, and academically competent; empathetic, kind, caring, and fair; creative and curious; disciplined, self-directed, and goal-oriented; free; a critical thinker; confident; and cared for and valued” (Kochhar-Bryant, & Heishman, 2010, p. 12). Given this description and for the purpose of this study, WPD will include cognitive flexibility, social and spiritual awareness, emotional health, and physical mobility, which assists students in reaching self-actualization (Arnold, 2017).

**Cognitive development.** In the first component of WPD, cognitive development, all five of the five Cs of PYD theory factors (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring) are pertinent (Erdem, DuBois, Larose, Wit, & Lipman, 2016; Geldhof et al., 2015; Lerner et al., 2005; Overton, 2014). Because adolescents are impressionable, their cognitive development is impacted by their culture. Vygotsky (1978) reported that cultural development occurs on a social and individual level. Individually and within their culture, adolescents are involved members of their developmental process (Piaget, 1983). An adolescent’s “values, norms, and beliefs will manifest in and through customs and rituals” (Wang, 2018, p. 54). Based on these experiences, an adolescent’s cognitive development will be impacted. An adolescent who



displays cognitive flexibility (a component of executive functions) is able to adjust to changed demands or priorities, while seeing the same situation from different perspectives. Youth who are able to develop cognitive flexibility are able to think before they act, oppose temptations or abrupt responses, remain focused, reason, and problem-solve (Diamond & Ling, 2016), and adjust to the many demands they encounter. Parents, teachers, coaches, and other community agents play an important role in communicating to youth cultural beliefs, norms, and expectations, which, in turn, shape their cognitive development (Wang, 2018).

Recent research provides many theoretical perspectives on development (Lerner, Lerner et al., 2015). However, a common theme uniting many of those perspectives is the notion that development is encouraged by conflict and the ways in which conflict is resolved (Salkind, 2004). To develop cognitive flexibility through high school football, the coach must assure that a diverse set of skills is being practiced. Everyday life activities, and student-centered high school curriculum geared towards training inhibition, memory, and cognition have shown more developmental benefits than targeted computerized training. Participating in high school football incorporates cognitive challenges and involves interacting with others. There have been encouraging results revealed through physical activity requiring thought, planning, concentration, problem-solving, and inhibitory control (Diamond & Ling, 2016).

Transformational coaching behaviors are connected with teenagers' personal development in sport, including the development of cognitive skills (Holt, 2016). Transformational coaching is a style of coaching focused on the needs of student-athletes. According to Bormann, Schulte-Coerne, Diebig, & Rowold (2016), "Transformational leadership focuses on the transformation of followers' needs" and "is about motivation toward their work instead of focusing on self-centered and extrinsic motives" (p. 268). Research has shown this type of coaching to be a

statistically significant predictor for the development of positive athlete attitudes and behaviors (Bormann et al., 2016). When youth have a positive outlook on life, they tend to be more creative. Creativity encourages an atmosphere favorable for cognitive growth and development in adolescents (Diamond & Ling, 2016). High school football coaches need to create an atmosphere where the student-athlete feels safe, secure, and significant. Cognitive development is a complex, involved, and dynamic process that happens in youth culture requiring trust and patience (Wang, 2018). All high school football coaches are accountable for the cultures they create and should accept responsibility for the outcomes of how they promote cognitive development within their programs. In the following section, social awareness will be discussed in light of the five Cs of PYD theory, and practical examples for fostering social development within a high school football context will be provided.

**Social development.** The social component of WPD is associated with all five of the five Cs of PYD theory factors (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring; Erdem et al., 2016; Geldhof et al., 2015; Lerner et al., 2005; Overton, 2014). For the purpose of this review, social development is focused on youth relationships. Ages thirteen to nineteen are a significant age for youth to grow and practice social skills and aptitudes needed to become productive members of society (Allemand, Steiger, & Fend, 2015). Family structure is a major influence for teenagers regarding their social development (Williams & Anthony, 2015). High school football coaches have the ability to support and present a positive family structure through their programs. During adolescence, there is a shift in relations with parents when their relations with peers develop qualities of exchange and closeness (Noam, Malti, & Karcher, 2014). While navigating these changes, adolescents need to “receive adult guidance, support, and encouragement that foster adaptive and productive development” (Noam et al., 2014, p. 99).

Supporting the positive development of youth is just as much a community responsibility as it is a family responsibility (Drinkard, Estevez, & Adams, 2017). According to Drinkard et al. (2017), “having connections with other adults embeds adolescents in a web of relationships with adults who can nurture positive values and social skills” (p. 366).

To effectively handle acceptance and rejection, proper social development is required for youth who deal with more difficult and ranked relationships than other age groups (Kilford, Garrett, & Blakemore, 2016). The experience with high school football should facilitate social interactions and provide coaches with an opportunity to model and teach empathy for student-athletes to emulate towards their peers. Empathy is described as sharing and understanding others’ points of view and emotions (Allemand et al., 2015). Allemand et al., (2015) recounted “adolescents who report higher empathy also report more pro-social goals, are socially more competent, are less aggressive, have more supportive peer relationships, are well liked by their peers, and are more likely to help others” (p. 229). Developing social behaviors like thoughtfulness, compassion, and active listening requires high school football coaches to model and teach teenagers to consider their peers’ opinions and feelings without ridicule

The majority of adolescents are susceptible to peer pressure and are likely to succumb to the pressure placed on them. Adolescents who have positive relationships with peers, parents, and coaches see an increased development in autonomy while those who engage in negative relationships experience initiation to unsafe behaviors like alcohol and drug use (Williams & Anthony, 2015). With a continued development of more complex aspects of social cognition across adolescence (Kilford et al., 2016), every high school football coach should use firsthand knowledge to support social development to enable their student-athletes to thrive in their relationships (Williams & Anthony, 2015). The atmosphere created during high school football

practices and games should promote communication among student-athletes allowing them to practice and learn how to use I-messages, become active listeners, work towards joint solutions, become meta-communicators, and participate in self-reflection during conflict situations (Allemand et al., 2015). High school football should be structured to teach and explain both negative and positive peer pressure and develop student-athletes' ability to identify and respond correctly. For the next section, I will examine spiritual awareness against the backdrop of the five Cs of PYD theory and provide useful examples for promoting spiritual development within high school football student-athletes.

**Spiritual development.** In this portion of the review, all five factors (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring) of the five Cs of PYD theory are aligned with the spiritual component of WPD (Erdem et al., 2016; Geldhof et al., 2015; Lerner et al., 2005; Overton, 2014). It is necessary to make the distinction between religion (i.e., religiosity), and spirituality. Even though there may be a connection between the two, the ideas are not the same. Religion has been defined as an ordered structure of beliefs, customs, routines and images aimed to enable nearness to the sanctified and to support religious communities (Morrell, Nelson, James, Miles, & Sledge, 2017; Nadal, Hardy, & Barry, 2018). An adolescent's expression of spirituality goes beyond specific religious doctrinal traditions to include his or her transcendence to understanding life (Morrell et al., 2017). As reported by Harley and Hunn (2015), "spirituality is the building block that helps children's and adolescents' psychological development, providing a context for decision-making and healthy life paths" (p. 6). Unfortunately, the emphasis to develop in other areas of their lives has left teenagers in America delayed in their spiritual development (Brandes, 2018). When adolescents develop a sense of purpose beyond themselves (i.e., transcendence), in a way that establishes or confirms their beliefs and

commitments (i.e., fidelity), causing them to become productive members of society (i.e., positive behavior), spiritual development has occurred (King, Kim, Furrow, & Clardy, 2017). After much investigation, this section of the review will focus on the role of transcendence, fidelity, and behavior in teenage spiritual development while providing information for how to create an environment through high school football to promote such development.

Developmental psychology literature provides evidence that adolescents are concerned with understanding transcendence (King et al., 2014). The interactions high school football provides should afford student-athletes the opportunity to experience a life of significance beyond themselves leading to a “growing sense of transcendence in regard to God, a divine entity, humanity, a religious community, peers, or nature” (King et al., 2014, p. 188). High school football coaches have a unique opportunity to provide a setting for teaching their student-athletes to become part of a program that is much bigger than themselves. If coaches choose to do so, they will use their position to assist others in the pursuit of spiritually developing teenagers. Spiritual development for adolescents occurs in relationship with others (King et al., 2014) and is one of the opportunities high school football coaches have for developing the whole student-athlete.

Supporting adolescents toward their fidelity could open a door for spiritual development. The words *faith* and *belief* coincide. Although high school football student-athletes are participating because they want to, there are instances when they must do things they do not necessarily want to do. High school football coaches have the opportunity to guide players to do the things they do not want to do so they can become the team they want to be. When adolescents are intensely involved with a passion like playing a sport, they are likely to experience faith and spirituality (King et al., 2014). The selflessness required to be a high school

football player affords a unique opportunity for coaches to encourage their student-athletes to adhere their beliefs while maintaining open-mindedness regarding what they believe and its impact on their lives and the lives of those they love (King et al., 2014). This belief is outside of the personal or natural realm and is not necessarily a belief in a particular religion. Brandes (2018) suggested that “identity shapes faith; in turn, faith shapes identity” (p. 196). Through high school football, approximately 1.1 million (National Federation of High Schools [NFHS], 2017b), adolescents who identify as football players are provided an opportunity for their coaches to assist them in the area of transcendence and fidelity.

High school football has the opportunity to create change in a positive way if the coaches make positive development a priority. Just as there is evidence of which team won the game as indicated by the score, high school student-athletes’ behavior will be evidence of how they have been developed by those with influence over them. A concentrated effort on the part of parents, coaches, and all others who support adolescents should promote acts of service, leadership, and ethical living (King et al., 2014). Through an adolescent’s interactions with others, their fidelity, transcendence, and behavior will reflect their level of spiritual development. As an extension of the classroom, high school football occurs to create and support “a growing clarity and commitment to beliefs, values, and purpose that in turn motivates a way of living that benefits others” (King et al., 2014, p. 206).

Considering the functions of spiritual development previously discussed, high school football coaches must realize how to assemble their programs to empower spiritual development in their student-athletes. Creating positive experiences for high school student-athletes to fulfill an individual role on the team will promote confidence while helping them feel comfortable in their identity. Assisting youth on their journey to find positive purpose for their lives within the

high school football setting may provide them with firsthand experience for choosing what is best for the team over potential risky behaviors. Identifying and training upperclassmen to help facilitate acceptance for underclassmen and their identified roles on the team will aid in the positive illustration of belonging (Brandes, 2018). If an adolescent is given an opportunity to experience positive outcomes through a combined effort like high school football, they may develop a sense of worth, seeing “inherent value of self, others, and creation” (Brandes, 2018, p. 197). In the ensuing section, I will analyze emotional health within the scope of the five Cs of PYD theory and offer real-world examples for supporting emotional development for adolescent high school football players.

**Emotional development.** In an effort to continue linking the five Cs of PYD theory to WPD, the emotional component discussed in this section is relevant to all five Cs (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring; Erdem et al., 2016; Geldhof et al., 2015; Lerner et al., 2005; Overton, 2014). The extent of time from the student-athletes’ freshman year of high school until their graduation is a significant period for the advancement of emotional skills (Haas et al., 2018). Teaching youth how to understand and express their emotions through high school football is another opportunity high school football coaches are afforded. To maximize emotional development for student-athletes, high school football coaches must model and instruct emotional clarity (EC). If done properly, high school student-athletes will have the ability to recognize, comprehend, and distinguish among their own emotional experiences (Haas et al., 2018).

Teenage years are full of extreme change and if high school football coaches are going to maximize their opportunity to promote positive emotional development, they need to study how emotional clarity changes throughout this time period. It has been reported that “EC

development might be driven by cognitive, as well as emotional, factors involving the ability to adequately process and think about emotion information” (Haas et al., 2018, p. 2). If high school student-athletes become obsessed with a negative affect, it may lead to lower emotional clarity development resulting in a misunderstanding of their emotional experiences (Haas et al., 2018). When high school football coaches are trained properly, they can identify the results their student-athletes are displaying due to their feelings. The coaches can then redirect and encourage their student-athletes with traits related to emotional clarity (e.g., openness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness; Haas et al., 2018).

An adolescent’s emotional expression (EE) reveals the absence or presence of EC (Pollastri, Raftery-Helmer, Cardemil, & Addis, 2018). An example of EE is the behavior or response of a teenager. According to Pollastri et al. (2018), “increased likability, intimacy, and relationship satisfaction” are some of the “social benefits” to effectively displaying emotion (p. 69). On the other hand, when emotions are kept inside, there are unwanted results of reduced communication and diminished rapport in relationships (Pollastri et al., 2018). High school football coaches are in a unique position given that student-athletes participate on a voluntary basis. This relationship, if nurtured positively, provides an avenue of trust and acceptance for high school football coaches to use evidence-based research to properly assist their student-athletes in this aspect of emotional development.

Emotional expressivity through high school football may possibly lead to better social outcomes for high school student-athletes. As a predominantly male sport, high school football coaches need to understand how emotional expressivity pertains to high school male student-athletes. Younger adolescent males are especially prone to perceiving a negative label from older adolescent males when they show a lack of emotional control. If done properly, the high



school football experience should aim to foster and facilitate positive relationships among all stakeholders. Doing so will allow for greater expression of emotion for student-athletes who are among trusted friends (Pollastri et al., 2018). For the final portion of WPD, I will explore physical mobility in view of the five Cs of PYD theory and suggest realistic examples for endorsing physical development in the lives of 13- to 19-year-old football players.

**Physical development.** The confidence factor from the current five Cs of PYD theory is found in the final component of WPD, physical development (Erdem et al., 2016; Geldhof et al., 2015; Lerner et al., 2005; Overton, 2014). Physical development is essential for high school football coaches to consider and promote within their high school football program. For that reason, this portion will concentrate on the high school football coach's responsibility as it pertains to strength and conditioning, diet, nutrition, and the physical demands (i.e., injuries and aggression) experienced through the sport. A well-developed, evidence-based strength and conditioning program is significantly important to favorable school functioning, and dietary aspects of physical health. Included in the details of developing and implementing a year-round high school strength and conditioning program, should be resources regarding a balanced diet, proper nutrition and appropriate levels of caloric intake. With a concentrated effort on combining physical activity and proper nutrition, a high school football program that fosters physical awareness could motivate student-athletes to consume nutritious meals leading to greater WPD (Edwards & Cheeley, 2016).

Participation in high school football could lead to positively developing the whole student-athlete. Conversely, teenagers may experience "a range of mental, physical and negative outcomes, and may drop out of sport or physical activity as a result" (Stafford, Alexander, & Fry, 2013, p. 288). Given this knowledge, high school football coaches must build their program to

create an atmosphere that encourages participation through WPD. Being up-to-date on recent research in the areas of training, playing with injuries, and the physical aggression that accompanies high school football is a starting point for the aforementioned atmosphere. Not only should high school football coaches obtain as much evidence-based research as possible, they should apply the findings and adjust their approach based on the make-up of their team. Ongoing research and staying up-to-date with strength and conditioning trends will help high school football coaches be able to differentiate between concentrated training on the one hand, and overtraining (Stafford et al., 2013). Through the physical development component, a high school football program could create active student-athletes to benefit their “cognitive, physical, and brain health” (Chaddock-Heyman, Hillman, Cohen, & Kramer, 2014, p.25).

### **Summary**

I began this chapter by providing an overview that mentioned the gap in literature that exists regarding the specific factors shaping how youth sport coaches approach and deliver (Bean et al., 2018) positive and complete adolescent development. I then presented the theoretical framework by describing the five Cs of PYD theory, identified the developers, discussed how the theory has advanced PYD through sport literature and included how WPD during adolescence through high school football related to the five Cs of PYD theory. In the following sections, I synthesized the most recent evidence-based literature on PYD through sport while linking this knowledge to WPD during adolescence through high school football. Accordingly, based on an exhaustive review of relevant literature, I developed the following themes and accompanying subthemes for each:

- 1) Coach-athlete relationships
  - a. Transformational leadership
  - b. Transactional leadership
  - c. Servant leadership
- 2) Life-skill building activities
  - a. Autonomy
  - b. Competence
  - c. Relatedness
- 3) Opportunities for leadership
  - a. Team captains
  - b. Peer mentoring
- 4) Whole-person development
  - a. Cognitive
  - b. Social
  - c. Spiritual
  - d. Emotional
  - e. Physical

Given the lack of literature in relation to the particular elements forming how youth sport coaches foster (Bean et al., 2018) WPD during adolescence, I utilized the five Cs of PYD theory factors (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring) to address similarities with the five components of WPD (cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical) while attempting to relate those concepts to specific examples high school football coaches may take to address the gap in literature. The following chapter will cover the methods I used for this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Overview**

This study filled the gap in sport for development (SfD) literature (Whitley et al., 2019) regarding the specific factors influencing (Bean et al., 2018) how youth sport coaches deliver positive and complete adolescent development by exploring how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football. The purpose of this chapter is to provide enough detail to allow for the replication of my study and I begin it by presenting a complete description of the type of method, design, and approach I used. I follow this by revisiting the research questions, identifying the setting and sampling strategy for selecting participants, providing a detailed explanation for the procedures, and discussing my role as the researcher. The chapter continues with details for three different methods I used for collecting data and a concise rationale for each type of analysis used for analyzing the data. Finally, I conclude the chapter by fully defining the aspects of trustworthiness and discussing relevant ethical considerations or implications of the research study.

### **Design**

According to Patton (2015), “qualitative inquiry documents the stuff that happens among real people in the real world in their own words, from their own perspectives, and within their own contexts” (p. 12). I chose a qualitative methodology to explore (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018) Coach Clark’s perspective on how to address WPD during adolescence through high school football at County High School. Patton (2015) described qualitatively studying how things work as “getting inside the phenomenon of interest to get detailed, descriptive data and perceptions about variations in what goes on and the implications of those variations for the people and processes involved” (p. 6). I got inside WPD during adolescence by gathering

exhaustive facts, insights from Coach Clark about the different ways he addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football at County High School, and the connotation of those differences for all stakeholders. Patton (2015) explained that once the investigation is complete, qualitative researchers make sense of descriptive data and perceptions by discovering patterns and themes within the confusion and peculiarity of it all. For my qualitative study, I used a specific pattern-matching technique (Yin, 2018) to determine what was meaningful.

While discussing case study research, Creswell and Poth (2018) pointed out its long acclaimed history throughout many academic disciplines. Patton (2015) provided a list of pioneers connected to qualitative inquiry and referred to them as giants who grounded their qualitative research in systematic investigation through time, field of study, culture, and branch of knowledge. According to Patton (2015), one of the first pioneers to use qualitative inquiry through interviewing and documentation dates back to sometime between 484-425 BCE. Since, there have been many scholars who have been credited with using qualitative inquiry by way of document analysis, observations, and interviewing to name a few.

All empirical research studies have a research design in place to logically arrange and link verifiable data to a study's initial research questions and, eventually to its findings (Yin, 2018). For a case study research design, Yin (2018) identified research questions, propositions, defining and bounding the case, connecting data to propositions, and criteria for making sense of the findings as especially important. Identified as possibly the most important process while conducting a research study, Yin (2018) recommended defining case study research questions by reviewing relevant literature to pinpoint a specific topic for creating explanatory questions that have both substance and form.

The original aim of a case study is founded on its theoretical proposition which leads researchers to review related literature and to develop research questions (Yin, 2018) intended to address the purpose of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Yin (2018) suggested justification for doing a case study requires one to “define a specific real-world ‘case’ to be the concrete manifestation of any abstraction” (Yin, 2018, p. 31). Although Yin (2018) provided several examples for the types of conditions that fall within a case (organizations, social groups, geographic locations, or other relevant features), he recommended setting specific time boundaries with an estimated start and end as desirable for any case study topic. To create a strong basis for future case study analysis by linking data to propositions, researchers are encouraged to become aware of how analytic techniques (i.e., pattern-matching) best suit their case (Yin, 2018). Finally, Yin (2018) identified criteria for interpreting the findings of case study research designs as discovering, addressing and rejecting rival explanations as a way to strengthen the findings of the study.

The case study design was appropriate for my topic because it was based on my theoretical proposition that if properly designed, high school football may provide youth with the necessary developmental skills needed to operate as and become productive members of society while offering opportunities for both PYD and WPD. Following Yin’s (2018) suggestions, my proposition served as a guide for the PYD through sport, Sport for Development (SfD), adolescent development, human development, and life skills development literature I reviewed to construct and define my research questions. To assure that my research questions had both substance and form (Yin, 2018), I structured them to ensure the clarity of the study and used “how” questions to form them (p. 12). For example, my central research question was as follows: How does Coach Clark address the development of the whole person during

adolescence through high school football at County High School? To further support the use of a case study design for my study, I defined Coach Clark as a specific real-life case to serve as the concrete manifestation of my proposition (Yin, 2018). Not only has Coach Clark proven his worth as a high school football coach who is a father figure, positive member of his community, and an award winning coach (Cates, 2018; Roy, 2016), he has also earned an overall win-loss record of 79-21 and three state championships during his time as head coach at County High School (Cates, 2018).

When naming research questions, Yin (2018) suggested they clarify the boundaries of a case by the period of time the case will cover, a relevant organization, the kind of data to be collected, and the priorities for collecting and analyzing the data. I bounded my case by setting time period and organizational boundaries (Yin, 2018) regarding Coach Clark's tenure as a high school football coach at County High School. The type of evidence I collected was focused on how Coach Clark addressed the cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical development of his student-athletes through high school football at County High School. The procedures I used for collecting the data included interviews, documentation, and observations; and to analyze it, I relied on my theoretical proposition and pattern-matching. Based on Yin's (2018) guidance for defining the boundaries of a case, the naming of my research questions clarified the boundaries of my case.

My research questions and theoretical proposition require a specific type of case study that has its own design and data collection strategy (Yin, 2018). The basic type of case study designs Yin (2018) suggested using are single- and multiple-case. When characterizing a (Type 1) holistic single-case design, Yin (2018) recommended that it be a critical case "related to your theory or theoretical propositions of interest" (p 49), "organized around a single case" (p. 288),

and used when “no logical subunits can be identified” (p. 52) for analysis. Based on Yin’s (2018) rationale, I selected a (Type 1) holistic single-case design to organize WPD during adolescence through high school football around Coach Clark who served as the critical case and single unit of analysis to establish whether my proposition was correct or if there was another set of explanations that were correct.

### **Research Questions**

**CQ:** How does Coach Clark address the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School?

**Sub-question 1:** How does Coach Clark address the cognitive development of his players through high school football at County High School?

**Sub-question 2:** How does Coach Clark address the social development of his players through high school football at County High School?

**Sub-question 3:** How does Coach Clark address the spiritual development of his players through high school football at County High School?

**Sub-question 4:** How does Coach Clark address the emotional development of his players through high school football at County High School?

**Sub-question 5:** How does Coach Clark address the physical development of his players through high school football at County High School?

### **Setting**

This qualitative single-case study was conducted at County High School. I intentionally selected participants (e.g., former student-athletes, principal, athletic director, assistant coaches, and current parents) and this setting because together they could purposefully inform an understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2018) of the unique approach Coach Clark utilized to address



WPD during adolescence as the head football coach at County High School. The selection of my setting was solely dependent upon Coach Clark being the head football coach at County High School and the other participants offering an in-depth understanding (Patton, 2015) about how Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence. During his time at County High School, Coach Clark has managed to win the high school's first ever football state championship, and two more after, utilize high school football as a tool to develop the student-athletes who have been entrusted to him, and support and encourage an entire community through his high school football program (Cates, 2018, Roy, 2016). Purposeful sampling was used to select one public high school in the state of Virginia because the other participants offered useful manifestations (Patton, 2015) of Coach Clark's approach to WPD during adolescence through high school football at County High School.

County High School was founded in 1973 and is located in a small rural town in the southeastern part of the United States with a total population of 15,681. County High School has a student enrollment of 718; 51% female and 49% male. County High School has a total minority rate of 32% (American Indian/Alaskan Native 0.1%, Black 22%, Hispanic 2%, White 68%, two or more races 7%; U.S. News and World Report's Rankings, 2018). Since being founded, County High School football has participated in the Virginia High School League at both the division one and two level. During Coach Clark's tenure as the head football coach at County High School, the football program has won 79 games and lost 21. During the 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 seasons, the football team has won three state championships and compiled a 55-2 win-loss record. In addition, the football team has been recognized for their community service during times of tragedy (i.e., tornado, student deaths; Cates, 2018). I obtained contact information for the site through the County High School website. Prior to

contacting the site, I sent the following letters: School District Permission to Contact Letter (Appendix A), and School Permission to Contact Letter (Appendix B).

### **Participants**

Purposeful sampling is a strategic approach to selecting information rich cases that align with a researcher's purpose, research questions, and the evidence to be collected (Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) presented 40 purposeful sampling strategies and since there were so many choices, he arranged them into eight categories. Patton's (2015) first category, a single significant case, is defined as "one in-depth case that provides rich and deep understanding of the subject" (p. 266). Within this category, Patton (2015) explained the purposeful sampling strategy of a critical case as a mass of proof from a single critical case that allows for a "logical generalization and maximum application of information" to cases that are similar (p. 266). Similarly, Creswell and Poth (2018) recognized the critical case as a type of sampling strategy available to qualitative researchers.

A total of 13 people agreed to participate in this study, but three did not respond to follow-up emails. Therefore, this qualitative single-case study included one primary participant and nine other secondary participants for a total of 10 participants. As the primary participant, Coach Clark served as the critical case and single unit of analysis for WPD during adolescence through high school football. The other secondary participants consisted of Coach Clark's former student-athletes, principal, athletic director, assistant coach, and parent volunteer. The other participants provided eye witness accounts for how Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football at County High School. Coach Clark has been the head football coach at County High School for eight years and all secondary participants have worked with him for multiple years as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Participant  
Demographics*

Pseudonym	Role	Age	Race	Gender	Experience with Primary Participant
Coach Clark	Head Football Coach	56	Caucasian	Male	N/A
Dr. Paul	Principal	44	Hispanic	Male	8 years
Mr. Clay	Athletic Director	49	Caucasian	Male	11 years
Caroline	Parent Volunteer	43	Caucasian	Female	6 years
Daryl	Former Player	22	African American	Male	8 years
Alex	Former Player	21	African American	Male	8 years
Troy	Former Player & Assistant Coach	23	Caucasian	Male	7 years
DJ	Former Player	23	African American	Male	7 years
Manny	Former Player	20	Caucasian	Male	8 years
Mark	Former Player	21	African American	Male	8 years

As well as determining a type of sampling strategy to use, Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested that qualitative researchers address and identify one or more of the following levels of sampling: the participant level, the site level, and the event or process level, of which I addressed

two. At the participant level, a critical case purposeful sampling pool of 10 was selected to decisively inform an understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2018) of the unique approach Coach Clark exercised to address WPD during adolescence through high school football. The information gleaned from Coach Clark, the other participants (e.g., former student-athletes, principal, athletic director, assistant coaches, and current parents), and additional sources of evidence collected about my topic may be logically generalized and fully applied to other similar cases (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Participants who offered a rich and deep understanding (Patton, 2015) from eye witness accounts of how Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football at County High School were chosen. At the site level, I chose an organizational boundary that fell inside the case (Yin, 2018), County High School. I obtained contact information for all participants from the County High School website. Prior to contacting all of the participants, I sent the following: Coach Clark Recruitment Letter (Appendix C), a Participant Recruitment Letter (Appendix D), a Coach Clark Consent Form (Appendix E), and a Participant Consent Form (Appendix F).

### **Procedures**

Securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Appendix G) was a necessary process required to ensure that participants were treated ethically throughout the course of this study (Liberty University Institutional Review Board, 2019). To secure IRB approval, I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI; Appendix H), IRB Application, and IRB signature page (Appendix I).

The data collection process was initiated once I received permission from the school district (Appendix J) and the local school (Appendix K) to engage their head football coach as a participant in this study. I emailed a letter providing a brief description of the study, requested

permission to include their head football coach as a participant, and provided specific instructions on how I would contact their head football coach (Appendix A & B). Once I received approval from the superintendent and principal, I sent an email to Coach Clark and the other participants to include the following items:

1. A brief introduction of the study and of myself (Appendix C & D)
2. An explanation as to why they are being contacted
3. The recruitment letter (Appendix C & D)
4. The consent form (Appendix E & F)
5. A background/demographic survey (Appendix L & M)

Prior to my proposal defense, I secured experts in the field to review my study sample to ensure clarity of questions and wording. Upon receipt of all the IRB required forms, I piloted the interview with a small sample outside of my study who mirrored the participants to minimize the ambiguity and interpretation of results (Yin, 2018). After the pilot was complete, I continued the data collection process by conducting interviews that resembled guided conversations to help explain the “how and why” (Yin, 2018, p. 12) of WPD during adolescence through high school football. In addition, I utilized documentary information (e.g., newspaper articles, photographs, audio and video recorded interviews, Facebook posts, twitter tweets, mission and vision statements, and program implementation documents) to confirm and add value to other sources of evidence (Yin, 2018; i.e., interviews and observations) I collected. Finally, I observed Coach Clark in a real-world setting to add a new aspect for understanding while providing invaluable data to complement interviews (Yin, 2018). It is necessary to include that my professional network in the field of high school football coaching expedited communication and participation in the study.

I do not believe this was burden to the trustworthiness of Coach Clark or the other participants, rather the relationships fostered a desire for participation.

Upon completing the data collection process, I organized the data into digital files and created a system to name each file using spreadsheets to include all participants, dates, and other relevant features (Patton, 2015). To ensure the data were readily accessible, I converted the data and made plans for long-term secure file storage to include data as both text units and digital representations (Patton, 2015).

### **The Researcher's Role**

I am currently a doctoral candidate at Liberty University and have been teaching and coaching for 16 years in the public school setting: one year in Virginia, seven years in Florida, and eight years in Georgia. During that time, I have taught health and strength training while coaching football at the high school level. I earned my undergraduate degree from Liberty University in physical education in 2002, a master's degree from Virginia Tech in health education in 2004, and an educational specialist degree in teaching and learning in March 2012 from Liberty University. As a qualitative researcher and human instrument (Patton, 2015), I included my philosophical assumptions into the research of my case study.

Patton (2015) suggested that those who perform qualitative data collection and analysis serve as “the instrument of inquiry” (p. 33). As the human instrument, my perspective, experience, personal and professional background (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015) impacted this case study. For example, based on my personal and professional experiences, I was interested in exploring how to develop the whole person during adolescence through high school football in view of my personal perspective that high school football may be used as a distinctive tool to model and explain the purpose of life through WPD while creating excellence

and collaboration within the individuals of the program. According to Patton (2015), “qualitative inquiry provides a point of intersection between the personal and the professional” (p. 33). Although I am a current high school teacher and football coach, I have never had a working relationship with any of the participants; I was not a participant in this study, but rather, I served as the human instrument and recorded the participants’ replies. Similarly, I have no personal or professional relationship with the setting. County High School was chosen because I selected Coach Clark as a specific real-life case to serve as the concrete manifestation of my proposition.

Creswell and Poth (2018) described philosophical assumptions as ontological (view of reality), epistemological (how one knows reality), axiological (stance on value), and methodological (procedures in a study) opinions that help researchers direct their study. The greatest impact my assumptions had on data collection and analysis began with the type of research design I chose. For example, I organized my (Type 1) holistic single-case study around Coach Clark as a critical case and single unit of analysis for my theoretical proposition. Additionally, I structured my research questions in such a way as to ascertain the unique approach Coach Clark used to develop his student-athletes cognitively, socially, spiritually, emotionally, and physically and was committed to linking the findings to my proposition while identifying and discussing rival explanations during the data analysis process. Given Coach Clark’s reputation during his time as the head football coach at County High School, the assumption I had about him was that he would provide a thick and rich understanding of how to address WPD during adolescence through high school football.

## **Data Collection**

Case study inquiry depends upon an inquisitive mind before, during, and after conducting the case study (Yin, 2018). Case study data collection does not require a specific routine; it necessitates an ongoing back-and-forth practice between the phenomenon and the data being collected (Yin, 2018). Throughout the entire case, including the data collection process, the greatest responsibility of the investigator is to do justice to the case (Patton, 2015). Data triangulation (i.e., using multiple sources of data) aided in adding validity and credibility to the findings (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018) of this single-case study. To do this, the methods I used to collect data in order to support a strong case and to support and describe how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football included (a) interviews, (b) documentation, and (c) observations. I chose this particular sequence because qualitative inquiry is personal (Patton, 2015). I aimed to establish a relationship with Coach Clark and the other participants (e.g., former student-athletes, principal, athletic director, assistant coaches, and current parents) to enable them to be comfortable and forthcoming throughout the study. Beginning with the interview provided me an opportunity to create an atmosphere conducive to the aforementioned while providing greater insight into the unique approach taken to address WPD during adolescence, as well as it provided me insight and direction for the documentation collection process and final observation.

## **Interviews**

No matter the chosen format, qualitative interviewing should ask open-ended questions to allow interviewees an opportunity to convey their viewpoint in their own words (Patton, 2015). The primary intention for my qualitative interview was to understand how the participant perceived the phenomenon while capturing the complicatedness of their individual experiences



(Patton, 2015). For this study, a standardized open-ended virtual-based interview approach (Patton, 2015) was used to provide a framework for respondents to fully communicate their unique ideas concerning how Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football. Using the interview as an essential source of evidence is justifiable for this case study because it was about human action (Yin, 2018), which is how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School.

The moment I received IRB approval and informed consent from participants, the data collection process began with virtual interviews of 10 subjects consisting of Coach Clark and nine people who have firsthand knowledge of how he addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football at County High School. The interviews were captured both with audio recording as well as note-taking to guide the conversation while providing structure (Yin, 2018). Each interview was transcribed by NVivo transcriptions and edited by myself word-for-word to include extraneous words and utterances (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Using an interactive, relationship-building data collection strategy like this interview, I aimed to find answers to my central research question and five sub-questions.

#### Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions for Coach Clark

##### Coaching Philosophy

1. How would you describe your philosophy of coaching high school football?
2. How has your philosophy changed over time?
3. How would you describe your philosophy relative to the emphasis you place on winning?
4. How would you describe your philosophy relative to the emphasis you place on fun?

5. How would you describe your philosophy relative to the emphasis you place on player development objectives?
6. Describe any conflicts you find between winning, fun, and player development.
7. How are the conflicts between winning, fun, and player development objectives resolved?

#### Coaching Style Employed

8. How would you describe your style of coaching?
9. Why do you employ this style of coaching?
10. What type of climate or environment do you create for your players?
11. How would your players describe your style of coaching?
12. How do you typically react to misbehavior, bad calls, close games, winning, and losing?
13. Describe the type of leadership style you employ.

#### Goals for WPD

14. What characteristics of whole person development do you focus on when developing the whole student-athlete?
15. How do your players develop these characteristics?
16. What factors influence the development of these characteristics in your student-athletes?
17. What strategies do you use to develop these components of WPD?
18. How do you communicate and encourage ownership in the self-development process for your student-athletes?

### Player Characteristics

19. What are some of the major issues that you face with your players today?
20. Describe the specific strategies you have in place for dealing with such issues.
21. What type of guidance do you give players on current peer pressures like violence, drugs, etc.?

### Reactions to Several WPD Coaching Scenarios

The following are some examples of situations that have happened with some high school football programs. Think about each situation and describe how you would react as the coach of that team.

22. Academic (Cognitive): A player is struggling with a math course and needs to improve his grades to be eligible.
23. Choices (Cognitive): A player starts hanging around with the wrong crowd.
24. Social: A star player is mishandling his on-the-field success by creating dissention among certain players on the team.
25. Spiritual: A player is dealing with an issue and asks if you would pray for him.
26. Emotional: A player loses control on the field.
27. Physical: You receive information that several players are using performance enhancement drugs.
28. Teamwork (All dimensions of WPD): You notice a group of players who regularly leave practice before helping their teammates clean up.

### Overall evaluation of WPD in adolescence

29. When working with high school football players, what roadblocks do you face in developing the whole person?
30. How successful have you been relative to helping your players develop as people?
31. Can you give an example of both a successful and an unsuccessful situation in helping a player completely develop?
32. Thinking back to the players who have graduated from your program, what similar characteristics do they have?
33. How do you describe your personal rewards for the hours you have spent coaching over the years?
34. What advice would you give to other coaches relative to enhancing player character and WPD during adolescence?

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions for other Participants (e.g., former student-athletes, principal, athletic director, assistant coaches, and current parents)

### Coach Clark's Coaching Philosophy

1. How would you describe Coach Clark's philosophy of coaching high school football?
2. Describe how Coach Clark's philosophy has changed over time?
3. How would you describe Coach Clark's philosophy relative to the emphasis you place on winning?
4. How would you describe Coach Clark's philosophy relative to the emphasis you place on fun?

5. How would you describe Coach Clark's philosophy relative to the emphasis you place on player development objectives?
6. Describe any conflicts you believe Coach Clark has between winning, fun, and player development.
7. How does Coach Clark resolve the conflicts between winning, fun, and player development objectives?

#### Coaching Style Employed

8. How would you describe Coach Clark's style of coaching?
9. Why do you think Coach Clark employs this style of coaching?
10. What type of climate or environment does Coach Clark create for his players?
11. How do you believe his players describe his style of coaching?
12. How does Coach Clark typically react to misbehavior, bad calls, close games, winning, and losing?
13. Describe the type of leadership Coach Clark employs.

#### Goals for WPD

14. What specific aspects does Coach Clark focus on when developing the whole student-athlete?
15. How do you believe his players develop these?
16. What factors influence their development?
17. Describe the type of strategies Coach Clark uses to develop the components of WPD.

18. How does Coach Clark communicate and encourage ownership in the self-development process for his student-athletes?

#### Player Characteristics

19. What are some of the major issues Coach Clark's players face in society today?
20. Describe some of the strategies Coach Clark has in place for dealing with such issues.
21. What type of guidance does Coach Clark give his players on current peer pressures like violence, drugs, etc.?

#### Reactions to Several WPD Coaching Scenarios

The following are some examples of situations that have happened with some high school football programs. Think about each situation and describe how you believe Coach Clark would react as the coach of that team.

22. Academic (Cognitive): A player is struggling with a math course and needs to improve his grades to be eligible.
23. Choices (Cognitive): A player starts hanging around with the wrong crowd.
24. Social: A star player is mishandling his on-the-field success by creating dissention among certain players on the team.
25. Spiritual: A player is dealing with an issue and asks if Coach Clark would pray for him.
26. Emotional: A player loses control on the field.
27. Physical: Coach Clark receives information that several players are using performance enhancement drugs.

28. Teamwork (All dimensions of WPD): Coach Clark notices a group of players who regularly leave practice before helping their teammates clean up.

Overall evaluation of WPD in adolescence

29. What roadblocks does Coach Clark face in developing the whole person during adolescence?
30. What do you believe is Coach Clark's success rate relative to helping his players develop as people?
31. Can you give an example of both a successful and an unsuccessful situation where Coach Clark has attempted to help his players completely develop as productive members of society?
32. Thinking back to the players that have graduated from Coach Clark's program, what similar characteristics do they have?
33. How do you believe Coach Clark would describe his personal reward for the hours he has spent coaching over the years?
34. What advice do you believe Coach Clark would give to other coaches relative to enhancing player character and WPD during adolescence?

The interviews with Coach Clark and the other participants are similar in structure and design so the following explanations will apply to both sets of questions. Questions one through 13 were opinion and value questions meant to understand the participants' logic (Patton, 2015) and invite them to reflect on a coaching philosophy and style employed. Research suggests transformational coaching to be a statistically significant predictor for the development of

positive athlete attitudes and behaviors in adolescents (Bormann et al., 2016). Transformational coaching is a style of coaching focused on the needs of student-athletes. For example, transformational leadership concentrates on motivating followers towards achieving their goals and desires, as opposed to focusing on the needs of themselves (Bormann et al., 2016). Consequently, it is significant to ask questions that will help the interviewee reflect on the level of awareness about a coaching philosophy and style employed, and on the progress made in examining and evaluating it.

To this point in the interview, I set out to establish a good rapport (Patton, 2015) with the participants allowing them to be more intimate about their perspectives on WPD during adolescence. Questions 14 through 28 were experience and behavior questions aimed to discover how the interviewee understands or addressed (Patton, 2015) WPD during adolescence. In particular, the participants were questioned on player characteristics and several different potential scenarios where opportunities for WPD during adolescence may occur. These questions are underpinned by the process-relational worldview (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015; Overton, 2015a) and RDS metatheory (Lerner et al., 2016; Overton, 2014) which depicts the basic developmental process as involving equally important dealings between people and their contexts (Lerner, Hershberg et al., 2015).

High school football coaches who create an atmosphere where the student-athlete feels safe, secure, and significant promote an atmosphere conducive to WPD. For example, cognitive development is a process requiring trust and patience during adolescence (Wang, 2018). For youth to develop positive social behaviors (i.e., active listening, kindness, and empathy) they have to consider their peers' perspectives without judgement or condemnation (Allemand et al., 2015). Spiritual development is selfless and focuses on developing relationships with others



while standing firm in one's beliefs, but also expressing value for another's views (King et al, 2014). Emotional skills associated with WPD are at an optimal rate during the adolescent years (Haas et al., 2018) and this line of questioning fostered a better understanding for how the participants understand or addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football.

Questions 29 through 33 were sensory questions designed to understand stimuli experienced by the participants (Patton, 2015) regarding WPD during adolescence. Furthermore, these questions engaged the interviewee in reflexivity (Patton, 2015). For example, the questions were designed to evoke a deeper introspection and interpretation (Patton, 2015) for how WPD during adolescence was addressed. Recent research on adolescent development literature indicates both intentional and unintentional approaches (Pierce, Kendellen et al., 2018). My intention was to understand the participants' perspectives and to identify their understanding or approach to WPD during adolescence through high school football. Finally, question 34 was a one-shot question (Patton, 2015), and was included to provide the participants with one final opportunity to offer their perspective on WPD during adolescence and anything else they wanted to include.

### **Document Analysis**

Written communication, whether paper or electronic, is a rich source of qualitative data (Patton, 2015) which may provide evidence deserving of further investigation in case study research (Yin, 2018). For the this single-case study, I used documentation to confirm or provide support for evidence from other sources of evidence (Yin, 2018). At the very beginning of the data collection process, I asked for recommendations and negotiated with the participants for access to potentially important documents (Patton, 2015).

Documents I examined included the following types: (a) individual documents, (b) community documents, (c) Internet groups, and (d) football program documents (Patton, 2015). The individual documents I included were photographs, schoolwork, and scrapbooks. Specifically, I requested permission from Coach Clark and the other participants for copies of any communication exchanged between Coach Clark and his student-athletes during his tenure at County High School. Regarding community documentation, I included local newspapers, historical photos (i.e., pictures related to Coach Clark's tenure as the head coach at County High School) and documents, Email, and audio and video recorded interviews (Patton, 2015). I aimed to explicitly collect newspaper articles and interviews that pertained to Coach Clark's time at County High School by subscribing to local online newspapers and media outlets. For the internet group documentation, I included blog and social media postings (Patton, 2015). In particular, I collected Facebook posts and tweets on twitter concerning County High School football during Coach Clark's time as the head coach by following both County High School football and Coach Clark on these social media outlets. Finally, I collected program documentation like mission and vision documents, staff meeting agendas, public relation documents, clinic presentations, program implementation documents, and evaluation reports (Patton, 2015). In particular, I sought approval from Coach Clark to make copies of the County High School football handbook and other relevant program documents pertaining to his time as the head coach.

Gaining access to the above documents provided me with information about happenings I could not observe (Patton, 2015). As I moved through the documentation process, I concentrated on the purpose of my study and focused only on the most relevant information (Yin, 2018). I also kept a research journal (Yin, 2018) throughout the study to document specific guidelines for

what was to be included and excluded from the journal. As with the first source of evidence, I aimed to find answers to my central research question and five sub-questions as a result of the documentation process.

### **Observations**

Qualitative analysis includes observations which chronicle full accounts of a participant's happenings, conduct, deeds, and all-around interactions and structural processes that are part of the participants' experiences (Patton, 2015). Observational evidence is useful to witness the phenomenon and served as a complementary source of evidence to the two previous sources, as well as added a new dimension for understanding (Yin, 2018) how the participant addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football. In addition, I made direct observations of behaviors and was a non-participant observer (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018).

During the data collection phase, I conducted seven announced observations during one of each of Coach Clark's football strength training classes, practices, film training sessions, team meals, and before, during, and after a scrimmage. During the observation process, I used an observation protocol (Appendix N) including the time and other detailed information. For example, the protocol was filled with copious descriptive and reflective notes to reveal raw data, interpretation, and reflection to provide the reader with thick and rich descriptions of the observation (Patton, 2015). As with the first two sources of evidence, I aimed to find answers to my central research question and five sub-questions as a result of the observation process.

### **Data Analysis**

Analyzing case study data can be free from constraint of overly restrictive rules (Yin, 2018). However, using one of Yin's (2018) four general strategies for getting started with the data analysis process, I relied on my theoretical proposition that if properly designed, high school

football may provide youth with the necessary developmental skills needed to operate as and become productive members of society while offering opportunities for both PYD and WPD. To prioritize what needed to be analyzed and why, I began the process of linking the data to my proposition by “playing” with the evidence to find potential patterns, or ideas (Yin, 2018, p. 164). Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested four parts of data analysis and understanding in case study research: categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, pattern identification, and naturalistic generalizations. Using these four forms, I analyzed the data from my single-case study for similarities and differences for each piece of data collected.

Through direct interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018), I looked for single occurrences and extracted significance without looking for similar instances for each type of data (i.e., interviews, documentation, observation) I collected. I followed this form by using categorical aggregation (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to gather similar instances from the interviews, documentation, and observation with the hope that issues pertinent to the phenomenon would surface. Based on categories developed through the categorical aggregation process, I found patterns (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018) among them for all three types of data collected. Given that each set of data was analyzed individually, I still triangulated the data (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018) from each method by grouping the categories into themes to generate them properly within the case.

Yin (2018) suggested modifying a chosen general strategy by applying one of five analytic techniques of data analysis to case study research: pattern-matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis. Identified by Yin (2018) as “one of the most desirable techniques,” I used pattern-matching to compare patterns revealed through this single-case study with my theoretical proposition (p. 175). To begin this process, I

uploaded every audio recorded interview (Appendix O) to NVivo transcription to assist with the data transcription process. Once all the audio from the interviews was uploaded to NVivo transcription, I then edited the transcribed interviews for accuracy. Throughout the analysis process, I used the qualitative data analysis software (QDAS) package NVivo to assist and serve as a reliable tool for coding and categorizing the large amounts of data (Yin, 2018) I collected. In particular, I used NVivo to cover text, audio, and video data, for guidance with coding and categorizing the plethora of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018) I accumulated through interviews, documentation, and observations. To document what I would include in the study, I also kept a research journal (Appendix P). After editing the transcribed interviews, I imported the data into the QDAS package NVivo to assist with the coding and categorizing of the data. I followed the same procedure for data collected from the documentation (Appendix Q), and observations (Appendix N).

Patton (2015) suggested that coding helps analysts develop significant themes from known patterns in qualitative inquiries. To make sense of the raw data and with the assistance of the QDAS package NVivo, I developed a coding scheme to identify, code, categorize, classify, and label the key patterns of data. Once all data had been uploaded to the QDAS package NVivo, I analyzed all three sources of data. Nodes (i.e., themes) began to emerge from coded references (Appendix R) for each data collection source. The nodes served as a container to store and categorize all the coded references from all three sources of data collected. To help guide naturalistic generalizations (Creswell & Poth, 2018), I found similarities and differences within the case. This naturalistic generalization aided in the interpretation and understanding of how Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football at County High School. However, I focused on one set of data at a time, and then compared the evidence

from the interviews, documentation, and observation to help triangulate the data to ensure relevant themes were identified to support replication (Yin, 2018). This within-case analysis analyzed how (Yin, 2018) Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence through high school football at County High School.

### **Trustworthiness**

The qualities to be used for increasing the trustworthiness of this study was as follows: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018). Although validation has quantitative overtones, there is a reported need for it in case study research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative trustworthiness is a term comparable to quantitative rigor (Patton, 2015). For this case study, data triangulation through the use of multiple sources of evidence (i.e., interviews, documentation, and observation) was used to support and corroborate the findings of the case (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018) to address the trustworthiness of this study. To illustrate this study's trustworthiness, I will draw parallels from Yin's (2018) four design tests used to establish the quality of most empirical research, including case study inquiry. The following steps that were employed to address credibility, dependability and confirmability, and transferability are briefly discussed below.

### **Credibility**

Internal validity, one of Yin's four design tests, seeks to establish a causal relationship between conditions relevant to the case (Yin, 2018). Patton (2015) likened credibility to internal validity so credibility will be referred to as the extent to which the findings accurately describe reality. To achieve credibility, I depended on the richness of the information gathered and on the data analysis process outlined by Patton (2015), Yin (2018), and Creswell and Poth (2018).

Using the participants and data from within the case, I triangulated the data to support the findings from more than one source of evidence. For example, I did pattern-matching by comparing and synthesizing any patterns from the interviews, documentation, and observation during the analysis of my single-case study (Yin, 2018).

### **Dependability and Confirmability**

Dependability and confirmability were established through an audit of the entire research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Reliability, one of Yin's (2018) four design tests, demonstrates that the process of the case study could be repeated with the same results. Patton (2015) related dependability to reliability so dependability will deal with consistency, which was addressed through the provision of rich detail about the context and setting of the study. To address dependability and confirmability, I used a case study protocol. I developed a case study database to organize and document the data with the assistance of NVivo, and I maintained a chain of evidence, so the reader was able to follow the evidence from my research questions to the findings of this case study (Yin, 2018).

### **Transferability**

External validity, one of Yin's (2018) four design tests, shows whether the findings from the case can be generalized. Patton (2015) related transferability to external validity so transferability will refer to the possibility that what is found in one context is applicable to another context. To verify transferability, I used theory within-case when addressing the findings of this case study (Yin, 2018). I provided an in-depth description of the case and findings to ensure the external validity of the findings.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Like all social scientists, case study researchers should strive for the highest ethical standards while conducting their studies (Yin, 2018). Prior to conducting qualitative research, the investigator must think through potential ethical issues that could surface and have a plan in place to address these issues (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The first step is to submit for approval to the IRB, a governing body who acts on behalf of the participants to maintain confidentiality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To gain approval from the IRB, I completed the CITI (Appendix H), the IRB Application, and IRB signature page (Appendix I). Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasized that this process is in place to supply the IRB with evidence of a chosen design prior to collecting data so the IRB can evaluate whether it follows the IRB guidelines for conducting ethical research.

Protecting the confidentiality of the participants was at the forefront of this study and I assured each participant was provided an informed consent (Patton, 2015) along with a detailed explanation of the purpose for the proposed study and the voluntary nature of the study which allowed them the option to withdraw at any time. To complete the process of writing letters to receive access to the setting and participant consent, I used the templates provided by the Liberty University IRB (Liberty University Institutional Review Board, 2019). In addition, each participant and setting were referred to by pseudonyms to further protect their confidentiality. Additionally, all data was kept on a computer which was password protected. Physical data was stored securely in a locked file cabinet. Raw data will be destroyed three years after the completion of this study. Finally, the analysis of this study was reported with honesty and integrity.



## **Summary**

I began this chapter by providing an overview that mentioned the purpose and need for this study. I then presented the method, design and approach for my case study by identifying why my study is qualitative, why the general case study design is appropriate, and why I selected a (Type 1) holistic single-case design. In the following six sections, I listed the research questions, described the setting, discussed the sampling strategy, reviewed the procedures, and addressed my role as the human instrument for this study. For the data collection methods section, I identified, defined, and justified the appropriateness of interviews, documentation, and an observation as data collection strategies for my single-case study. I followed this by providing a concise rationale for each type of data analysis I chose, and I specified how the proposed study is trustworthy by discussing its credibility, dependability and confirmability, and transferability. Finally, I discussed ethical considerations for conducting the proposed study. The following chapter will cover the findings for this study investigating how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

Chapter Four begins with a brief description of each participant; all have been assigned pseudonyms. The purpose of this qualitative single-case study is to describe how Coach Clark addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School. All participants have firsthand knowledge of how Coach Clark addresses WPD during adolescence through high school football. Quotations from participants are used to provide thick rich descriptions of the study's research questions and support the developing themes.

### **Participants**

Coach Clark has 32 years of experience as a high school teacher and football coach. During this time, Coach Clark has worked for three different high schools, and the last seven as a physical education teacher and head football coach at County High School. County High School is situated in a rural community in the southeastern part of the United States with a total population of nearly 16,000. There are four public schools in the entire county: County Primary School (PK-2), County Elementary School (3-5), County Middle School (6-8), and County High School (9-12). County High School originated in 1973 and has a student enrollment of just over 700. Based on their enrollment, and out of six total divisions in the State, the county high school football team competes at the division two level. Over the past seven years, the County High School football program has experienced success on the field by posting a 79-21 win-loss record with three state championships, and off the field through community service and achieving an over 90% graduation rate for student-athletes who begin the County High School football program their freshman year. To protect their identities, the 10 participants in this study are

identified below using pseudonyms. The population consisted of nine males and one female with ages ranging from 20 to 56. The participants agreed to send documentation and complete interviews; Coach Clark was part of the observations.

### **Coach Clark**

Coach Clark is currently serving as a physical education instructor and head football coach at County High School. Overall, Coach Clark has been teaching physical education and coaching high school football in the public-school sector for 32 years. During this time, the 56-year-old Caucasian male has worked for three different high schools: the first five years at Rural High School as an assistant football coach; the next 20 years at City High School, 17 as an assistant and 3 as the head football coach; and the past seven years as the head football coach at County High School. Prior to his teaching and coaching career, Coach Clark earned his Bachelor of Science degree and while at City High School, he earned his master's degree in leadership.

Throughout his time as the head football coach at County High School, Coach Clark has earned an overall win-loss record of 79-21. Over the past four seasons, Coach Clark's teams have compiled a 55-2 win-loss record including three state championships in a row during the 2015, 2016, and 2017 seasons. In addition, Coach Clark earned another state championship in 2002 during his time as an assistant football coach at City High School. Furthermore, Coach Clark has received numerous awards over the course of his time as the head football coach at County High School; most notably, he was presented with a key to the town where County High School is located and recognized as one of the most valuable high school football coaches in the country, an award he received during halftime of an All-American game nationally televised on ESPN.

Coach Clark's style of coaching and the leadership he employs at County High School has been embraced by the administration, faculty, student body and community of County High School. Coach Clark stated the following in the interview:

I think for me, I think I'm the type that wants to be authentic about coaching the right way. I want to set the right example by the way I live my life in front of the kids, so that in the end, they get something that is going to help them the rest of their lives to be successful in their relationships with their families, in their workplaces, and in society. We try to develop our kids by modeling the right life, through examples our coaches have experienced, guest speakers, and God's Word, so they make decisions to not take part in anything that doesn't match their goals and the goals of our team.

Although Coach Clark has been accepted and embraced by County High School and the town, his style of coaching was not accepted for the period he served as the head coach of City High School. After serving as an assistant coach for 17 years and then the head coach of City High School from 2009 – 2011, after 20 years of service to the school and the community, Coach Clark was fired from his position as head football coach.

Originally, Coach Clark was asked by his former principal to resign from his position to which he replied, "I will not quit on those kids. If you don't want me as your head football coach, you will have to tell them you are firing me." When Coach Clark's firing was first reported in 2011, there was no explanation provided by the school system, leaving unanswered questions for those who supported Coach Clark. However, those close to the school believed it was because Coach Clark used religion to motivate his players. Admittedly, Coach Clark encouraged his players to attend Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) events throughout his

time at City High School and continues to at County High School. Coach Clark stated the following in the interview:

God will do something I can't do. He will take average and make it great. I can work as hard as I want to try to get these kids to change their lives, and try to give them great psychology, and be a great example, but until I get on my knees and cry out to God and voice their names individually, and ask God to please work in their life, I don't know if I'm doing a whole lot of anything, I'll be honest with you.

### **Dr. Paul**

Dr. Paul is currently serving as the principal of County High School. Dr. Paul was hired as the principal of County High School in 2015 and has been a principal and assistant principal with the County school division since 2006. Prior to becoming a principal, the 44-year-old Hispanic male was a Spanish teacher, soccer coach, and athletic director for another school system. In 2014 Dr. Paul earned his Doctor of Education in leadership and is committed to building a climate at County High School where the entire staff impacts students in a powerfully positive way by being present, professional, and purposeful; by having respect for and building positive relationships with the students; and by giving students reasons for engaging in high-level academic learning and positive character-building.

Dr. Paul has known Coach Clark for approximately eight years and has been his principal for the last four. He describes their working relationship as wonderful. Dr. Paul stated the following in the interview:

Because Coach Clark is so highly regarded in the community, he's that buffer for us as an administration. It could be a parent that doesn't want anything from me and if I talk to

Coach Clark, he's able to smooth that communication over and I never thought I would have a football coach doing that, but he does, I mean, it's a wonderful tool to have.

During the interview, I asked Dr. Paul his perspective on how Coach Clark addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School and he stated the following: "I think he is so interested in developing all kids, not just football players."

### **Mr. Clay**

Mr. Clay is currently serving as the athletic director of County High School. Mr. Clay was hired as the athletic director in 2013. Prior to becoming the athletic director, the 49-year-old Caucasian male was a physics teacher and assistant coach for several junior varsity sports including football, baseball, softball, and basketball in a different school system. In 2007 Mr. Clay earned his first master's degree in science education and in 2010 he earned another master's degree in educational leadership. Mr. Clay described himself as a people person and enjoys getting to know the students.

Mr. Clay has known Coach Clark for eleven years and has been his athletic director for the last six. While Coach Clark was an assistant coach at City High School, Mr. Clay taught his children and commented on what a great father he is to his children. While explaining Coach Clark's style of coaching, Mr. Clay stated the following in the interview:

Coach Clark is like another father figure to these kids. He treats them like they are his own; I guarantee you any one of his players would tell you that. He is a lead-by-example type of coach who wants to embody what he instills in his athletes. If he wants the kids to do something, he is going to model it for them. He is not just about coaching football; he's about getting out in the community, serving and being a steward of the community.

During the interview I asked Mr. Clay his perspective on how Coach Clark addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School and he stated the following:

Coach Clark is about developing players to reach their full potential in football, their personal lives, education, and as model citizens in the community. He focuses on team, serving others, and making it enjoyable for the kids. Coach will send text messages, emails, tweets, and Facebook posts to help keep his players focused.

### **Caroline**

Caroline is currently working as a volunteer for the County High School football program. Caroline has been serving as a team mom since 2014 and works side-by-side with Coach Clark to coordinate team meals, guest speakers, community service events, and anything else the program may need. The 43-year-old Caucasian female has had two of her sons graduate from Coach Clark's program and continues to volunteer as a team mom because she believes in what Coach Clark is doing. Caroline earned her Bachelor of Science degree and currently works as an office manager. While explaining Coach Clark's style of coaching, Caroline stated the following in the interview:

Coach Clark is very high energy, charismatic, encouraging, a good communicator, and handles everything with class. He has clear expectations and works hard to help his players reach their full potential. No area is too small for him. He is engaged in all areas of the team and models everything for the boys.

During the interview I asked Caroline her perspective on how Coach Clark addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School and she stated the following:

He develops the overall person on the field and off the field. He wants to develop the physical, mental, and spiritual all the same. Through community service and hard work, he challenges and encourages them to do better in all areas and wants to develop them into better players, better citizens, and better students. As the players grow, he challenges them to do more by providing leadership opportunities and serves as an example for them to follow. Coach creates a very positive environment, is very high energy and enthusiastic. When his players see him like that, they want to perform for him. He teaches them that if you're winning in life, you will win at school, with your family, in your community, during practice and during the game.

### **Daryl**

Daryl is a former player of Coach Clark and graduated from County High School in 2015. Daryl's freshman year at County High School 2012, was Coach Clark's first year as the head football coach. The 22-year-old African American male recently earned his Bachelor of Science degree and is currently working as an associate facilities technician for a multinational technology company. While explaining Coach Clark's style of coaching, Daryl stated the following in the interview:

He was very intentional and understood that to get the best out of the team he had to get the best out of the individual, and he made sure he did that. He wanted to see how his system could best fit his players. He has a lot of humility. He wants to make sure that people are growing and progressing in life. Coach Clark never asked us to do something that he would not do. Although he was the head coach, he was always serving his players. His style of leadership is servant leadership.



During the interview I asked Daryl his perspective on how Coach Clark addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School and he stated the following:

He understood that at times his instruction would become cliché, so he allowed other people to speak to his players to reinforce the qualities he was trying to instill in them.

### **Alex**

Alex is a former player of Coach Clark and graduated from County High School in 2017. Alex and Coach Clark's coach-athlete relationship started eight years ago when Alex was a middle school football player in the town where County High School is located. The 20-year-old African American male is a full-time college student and is pursuing an undergraduate degree in psychology. When he is home from college, he works for a local tree company and loves to stop by County High School to visit with Coach Clark and the other coaches. While explaining Coach Clark's style of coaching, Alex stated the following in the interview:

Coach Clark looked to God to lead him. He was very deeply engaged into everything he did. He was all about the small details. He was very energetic, composed, and all about the team. He was dedicated to his players and believed it all started in the classroom.

Winning was not Coach Clark's biggest concern; working everyday towards improving was. He was the type of person to give you the shirt off his back if you needed it.

During the interview I asked Daryl his perspective on how Coach Clark addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School and he stated the following:

Coach Clark challenged his players mentally and physically, in a good way. He didn't ask us to do anything he wasn't willing to do. If he asked us to do 100-yard sprints, he would

run every other sprint. Coach taught us to put our heart into what we do and to always finish what we started. Coach Clark focused on everyone around him. He never once put himself before anybody else. Being a role model like that made us want to be like him.

## **Troy**

Troy is a former player of Coach Clark and graduated from County High School in 2014. Troy's sophomore year at County High School, 2013, was Coach Clark's second year as the head football coach. The 23-year-old Caucasian male works full time as a custodian and is currently an assistant coach on Coach Clark's staff. While explaining Coach Clark's style of coaching, Troy stated the following in the interview:

He loves the little details and is always prepared. The man works numerous crazy hours, not because he's forced to, not because the school has told him to, but because he believes he is supposed to give everything he's got for these kids, and that's what he does. He is the same person all the time.

During the interview I asked Troy his perspective on how Coach Clark addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School and he stated the following:

He teaches them to be disciplined, responsible, consistent, honest, confident, respectful, loving and to have good character, integrity, work ethic, and fun, no matter what they are doing. Coach makes sure that everyone is treated equally and has a deeper amount of responsibility within the team. He expects excellence and models everything he asks of his players.

## **DJ**

DJ is a former player of Coach Clark and graduated from County High School in 2015.

DJ has known Coach Clark for seven years. The 23-year-old African American male works for a cellular company and has spent several seasons on a junior college roster as a football player. He is planning to complete his degree in one to two years and hoping to earn a degree in Sociology. While explaining Coach Clark's style of coaching, DJ stated the following in the interview:

"Coach Clark was always very caring. He made sure that we all felt like we had a place on the team, from the best to the worst player. He treated us like a family."

During the interview I asked DJ his perspective on how Coach Clark addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School and he stated the following: "Of course, he wanted us to be good football players, but it wasn't his focus. He would always tell us that if we do all the little things right, we would be successful."

## **Manny**

Manny is a former player of Coach Clark and graduated from County High School in 2017. Manny has known Coach Clark for eight years and still considers him a mentor. The 20-year-old Caucasian currently works for an electrician company. He is still deciding whether he wants to go to college and is working his current job to save money. While explaining Coach Clark's style of coaching, Manny stated the following in the interview:

Coach Clark was animated, full of energy, committed, and passionate. He wanted the same from us, so whatever he demanded from us, he demanded from himself. He led by example in the school, during practice, at the games, and in the community. He was big on serving our team, the school, and the community.

During the interview I asked Manny his perspective on how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School and he stated the following:

So, he tried to develop us to be men of good character who put the needs of the team above ours and who were good examples to the younger kids. He coached every player on the team with the same intensity, whether they were a (sic) division one player or not. Even though he was very intense, he was also very caring and wanted everyone to be about the team.

### **Mark**

Mark is a former player of Coach Clark and graduated from County High School in 2016. Mark has known Coach Clark for seven years and looks forward to coming back during his breaks from college to see Coach Clark. The 21-year-old African American is currently attending college and hoping to earn his Bachelor of science degree in May of 2020. He also works a part-time job in the service industry. While explaining Coach Clark's style of coaching, Mark stated the following in the interview:

Coach Clark was always upbeat and ready to go. He wanted his players to have a great attitude and to give their best, so he would be that way for us. Coach was big on serving others whether it was the team, the school, his family, or the community. A big part of our team was community service. He was very humble and always looking out for others.

During the interview I asked Mark his perspective on how Coach Clark addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School and he stated the following: "He showed us what it looked like to be humble, to

serve your team and community, to be responsible, to be accountable, to have good character and integrity, and to work hard.”

## **Results**

This section is organized thematically according to the central research question, and five sub-questions. The central research question examined how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School. The first sub-question examined how Coach Clark addressed the cognitive development of his players through high school football at County High School. The second sub-question examined how Coach Clark addressed the social development of his players through high school football at County High School. The third sub-question examined how Coach Clark addressed the spiritual development of his players through high school football at County High School. The fourth sub-question examined how Coach Clark addressed the emotional development of his players through high school football at County High School. The fifth sub-question examined how Coach Clark addressed the physical development of his players through high school football at County High School.

### **Theme Development**

The data in this study were collected through interviews, document analysis, and observations. I began the data collection process by interviewing all 10 participants beginning with Coach Clark. The primary intention for each interview was to understand how the participant perceived Coach Clark’s approach to developing the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School, and to capture their individual experiences with Coach Clark. The open-ended virtual-based interviews were used so respondents could fully communicate their unique ideas concerning how Coach Clark addressed

WPD during adolescence through high school football and were audio recorded and transcribed. Each audio recorded interview was uploaded to NVivo transcription to be transcribed, edited, and then imported into the QDAS package NVivo to assist with the coding and categorizing of the data.

After conducting all 10 interviews, I asked Coach Clark and the other participants for recommendations to potentially important documents. All documentation collected either confirmed or provided support for evidence from the interviews and observations. Further, the documents (Appendix Q) collected provided me with information about Coach Clark's approach to WPD that I could not observe during the interviews and observations. I also kept a research journal (Appendix P) throughout the study to document what I intended to include in the study. Once all documents were collected, I imported them into the QDAS package NVivo to assist with the coding and categorizing of the data.

Finally, I conducted the observations to chronicle the full account of how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School. Throughout the observations, I took descriptive and reflective notes for later interpretation. After each observation, I reflected on the data, and organized the data for clarity. When all observations had been conducted, the notes were imported into the QDAS package NVivo to assist with the coding and categorizing of the data.

After the data collection process was complete and all data had been entered into the QDAS package NVivo, I began analyzing all three sources of data. Nodes (i.e., themes) began to emerge from coded references for each data collection source. The nodes served as a container to hold and organize all the coded references from each source of data collected. After analyzing all coded references from the interviews, documents, and observations, the following

seven themes emerged: Loving his players, Player-by-player approach, Life after high school, Family-oriented, Purpose beyond themselves, Builds resilience in players, Year-round strength and conditioning program. The themes and coded reference appearances are seen in Table 2.

Table 2

*Data Analysis*

Themes	Coded Reference Appearances
Loving his players	47
Player-by-player approach	38
Life after high school	56
Family-oriented	39
Purpose beyond themselves	29
Builds resilience in players	34
Year-round strength and conditioning program	18

**Loving his players.** Loving his players was a recurring theme among all three types of data collected (i.e., interviews, document analysis, observations), and one that answered the central research question for this study, how does Coach Clark address the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School. During the observations, Coach Clark displayed and described the type of love he hopes to instill in his student-athletes in accordance with 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (New International Version), “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor

others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” Coach Clark demonstrated this type of love to his student-athletes as a loving father does to his own children by being an example of unconditional love. For example, during the observations, Coach Clark displayed patience when his players did something wrong, guided them by providing corrective feedback and did so by making them feel safe, secure, and significant. In his interview, Dr. Paul shared his perspective on how Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence and stated the following: “Coach Clark loves them, and they know he loves them. He creates an environment of FAMILY (Forget About Me I Love You). They love each other.” Troy, a former player and current assistant coach shared the following during his interview: “Coach Clark’s style of coaching is very loving, demanding, challenging, encouraging, disciplined, energetic, caring, and motivational.” During the interview, Coach Clark stated the following:

A way to develop the whole player is to invite the kids into your home as often as you can. When they see you being honest, hardworking, respectful, and loving to your wife and kids, you're letting them know it's not just something you put on when you come to school; you're the same guy at home. I think when they see it lived out, it means more to them. Kids just seem to get it when you're living it out through your life.

A former player of Coach Clark, Daryl stated the following in the interview:

Coach Clark was very motivating and made sure we were loved during the process.

Coach Clark created a very loving environment and made sure we knew that he cared for us outside of football. We looked to him as a father figure.



DJ, a former player of Coach Clark stated the following in the interview:

I remember him using the word love a lot and he wanted us to love each other. He would not only tell us these things, he showed us by the way he treated us. He was like a father to us.

In an article from 2018 about the success County High School football has experienced during Coach Clark's time there as the head coach, Coach Clark stated the following regarding his approach: "Loving each other and serving each other—the more we do that, the better we seem to get" (Cates, 2018, p.1).

**Player-by-player approach.** An individualized player approach was a focus for Coach Clark, was a prominent theme across participants and data sources, and answered the central research question, how does Coach Clark address the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School. While discussing his approach to player development, Coach Clark stated the following in his interview:

We keep up with all their grades and of course chart them and give out awards, because, you know, we want them to know that's what we're really rewarding. We're not rewarding going out and winning a football game. We're actually giving rewards to the students of the week, guys that are getting and keeping their grades up. If we have a player who is struggling in a class, assuming he is properly placed, we immediately go to the teacher and find out the reason this guy is not able to perform. Once we find out why he is not performing well, we develop a strategy that he needs to be working and we check him to make sure he is doing his part. We make them responsible for what they are lacking and hold them accountable for improving. Some of the things we will do to help them improve is study hall and teach them time management and organizational

skills. Once he begins to take care of the issues that created his lack of performance, then we begin to organize tutoring sessions with his teacher and if necessary, use our practice time for those tutoring sessions.

In her interview, Caroline stated the following:

He doesn't put more emphasis on one more (sic) than the other. When developing the whole student athlete, Coach Clark looks at their home life, academics, job schedule, commitment level, time management, accountability, church life; he looks at every aspect of their lives. He focuses on building the players individually.

One of Coach Clark's former players, Daryl described Coach Clark's approach as follows: "He looked at every player individually to see what their needs were and what steps he needed to take to help that individual player. He didn't generalize for the entire team." Alex, stated the following in his interview: "He would deal with players individually, whether it was in the classroom, the weight room, or on the field." In his interview, Coach Clark's former player and current assistant coach, Troy had this to say,

He adjusts to the needs of his players and teaches that winning is a byproduct of doing the right thing at home with your parents, in school with your teachers, and in the community by working hard. He would deal with players individually, whether it was in the classroom, the weight room, or on the field. If there ever is an issue, Coach Clark is very level headed and calm when disciplining his players. He explains what they did wrong, what they need to do differently, and will discipline them based on the circumstance.

During the observations, I noticed Coach Clark engaging one student-athlete in several small private conversations during one of their practice sessions. At the conclusion of the practice,

Coach Clark informed me that this player had been in and out of foster care since the first grade and that he was not very trusting of males. Coach Clark stated the following while explaining his approach with this particular player: “I am working to establish a trusting relationship with him by providing individualized corrective feedback instead of pointing out his mistakes in front of the team. He will not respond well to that.” On another occasion during the observations, Coach Clark’s individualized player approach was on full display. For example, during the practice, weight training, and team meeting sessions, Coach Clark continuously asked questions of his players individually and collectively. Questions like: “Why should we adjust to the defense when they roll a safety down into the box”? “Why is it important for you to put your water bottle back into the carrier”? “Where should your eyes be when performing the back squat”? “Why”? On several occasions, I heard Coach Clark tell his student-athletes, “It matters what you know”.

**Life after high school.** Using all sets of data across participants, life after high school was an evident theme and answered sub-question number one, how does Coach Clark address the cognitive development of his players through high school football at County High School. During his interview, Coach Clark’s athletic director, Mr. Clay explained how Coach Clark prepares his players,

Coach creates an inviting environment for his players to develop skills for after sports by acting as a father figure and role model. He prepares his players and encourages them to take that preparation and apply it in their lives and in their futures. He teaches them that their decisions will have consequences and holds them accountable for the decisions they make.

When asked about Coach Clark's approach to WPD during adolescence, Troy explained,

He believes that football is just a game and that his main job is to prepare his players for the next step in life. Mentally, he is preparing them for the present and the future, for life after high school, whether that's college, a job, or the military. He uses football to work hand-in-hand with being a better man. The best life lesson I learned from Coach Clark, and really, why I love the game of football so much, is that in football, and in life, you are going to get knocked down, but you have to get back up. I learned through Coach Clark to make the decision to get back up.

During one of the observations and while Coach Clark was addressing his student-athletes in the course of a team meeting, Coach Clark stated the following:

Number one, if you don't have things right in your personal life, then you can't be a very good football player or person. This world is going to crush you. You've got to get a good grip on what it takes for you to be successful. And I'm not talking about successful by making money; I'm talking about being the type of person that wins in this life, because some of you guys are real close to just breaking away from your past and jumping into an unbelievable future, and you just need the right resource, and we're going to make sure you get the right resources.

While discussing Coach Clark's impact on his former teammates, Daryl shared the following during the interview:

There are a lot of guys that I played with coming up that were not considered good people, but coming up through Coach Clark's program, they developed some key principles they have carried over into their adult life and have experienced some success.

During the interview, Coach Clark shared the following:

We want to build the characteristics of being honest, trustworthy, accountable, responsible, to be somebody that not only the team can count on, but their families and teachers can count on. Along with this, we work to instill a good work ethic; we focus on helping them become better academically. Somebody that teachers, you know, will love having in class. We don't even talk about winning football games. We pretty much talk about winning every day in everything they're doing. We're telling them to learn as much as they can through all their experiences, through all their classes, even if they don't like them. These are things that may allow them to go on when sports are over. We teach accountability and responsibility from the very beginning. Understanding the importance of responsibility and accountability is the beginning to becoming a man. And then, because they are accountable and responsible, they learn to accept the response from their behavior. To reinforce the characteristics we are trying to develop in them, we celebrate and recognize their behavior with weekly academic, sportsmanship, honesty, and character awards.

Caroline shared her thoughts for how Coach Clark prepares his players for life after high school during the interview,

Coach Clark has a leadership committee for the team and if there is something going on that either he or the leadership committee believes needs to be addressed, they will work together to get it right. Honestly, Coach Clark is very open and wants to listen to what the kids have to say about the program. Once his players prove that they can be responsible over little things, Coach will add more responsibility and identify potential leaders as they develop.

While discussing ways Coach Clark motivated his players during his time as a County High School football player, and how he was better prepared for life after high school, DJ shared in the interview,

I believe Coach wanted us to be the best person we could be, not the best football player we could be. Every year Coach would give one player the “Eagle of the Year” award.

Every player on the team wanted that award. The player who won had his jersey framed and hung in the main entrance of our school. The award represented all those little things he wanted us to focus on: our grades and test scores, being on time, community service, having good behavior, attendance, being a good leader, and our play on the field. Even though we knew only one person would win the award, it motivated us to try to win it.

While collecting documents from the participants, I received an article covering the first-ever “Eagle of the Year” award recipient. This article confirmed DJ’s interview and included the following quote from Coach Clark:

Our first goal is to develop young men who are successful not only in football but in life with character and integrity. We try to get the kids to be the kind of men in society that we all can be proud of (Hamlett, 2014, p.2).

While analyzing the documents I received from the participants, I discovered the “Eagle of the Year” award and the criteria for earning this award. This honor is awarded to a County High School senior football player every year who has shown qualities of an “uncommon man”. He is a 4-year player who has accumulated the most “Eagle Yards” as given for GPA, SAT, and ACT scores, player of the week honors, volunteer work, punctuality, academics, fundraising, leadership, weight training, attendance, and behavior. The honored player has his jersey framed and hung in the main entrance of the school. During my observations I collected a photograph of

the “Eagle of the Year” award framed jersey, and the “Eagle of the Year” award plaque hanging in main entrance of County High School (Appendix S; T).

During one of the team meetings, I observed Coach Clark begin his discussion on leadership by challenging his players to lead themselves to be champions in everything they do. When he discussed leadership in front of the team, instead of asking them to lead their teammates, he stressed for them to be more concerned with making the right decisions at that moment. One of the documents I collected from Coach Clark during the observations was a leadership curriculum he uses with his players to develop them for opportunities to lead in the town where County High School is located and throughout their lives. The curriculum consists of resources Coach Clark has collected during his 32 years as a high school football coach. The section I observed Coach Clark address with the team was the concept of an iceberg representing his players’ leadership. Using this document as a guide, he described the 10% of the iceberg that is noticed above the water as their skill, and the 90% that is unseen below the water as their character. At the conclusion of his lesson, Coach Clark circled back to the idea of an iceberg and added that when a ship collides with an iceberg, it’s the 90% below the surface that sinks the ship. He implored his players to be young men of good character and whenever they are faced with making a decision to make the right decision at that moment.

**Family-oriented.** Family-oriented was a recurring theme among all three types of data collected and answered sub-question number two, how does Coach Clark address the social development of his players through high school football at County High School. During his interview, Coach Clark described the following:

My style of coaching may appear to be soft to some people because we are not cussing kids out. I have a family-oriented type coaching style where they feel loved and

disciplined in a structured environment. I treat them just like I would my own child. We always recognize their behavior, good or bad, and provide them with feedback. So, the environment we try to create is open and trusting, like a family. We have that family tightness, love and concern for each other. We're trying to develop them to help each other and trust each other. We talk about who they hang around and we ask them if those people do the things that match the goals they have.

During the observations, Coach Clark was everything he stated in his interview. He was open and honest with his players during team meetings, he focused on building personal relationships throughout the different settings by putting his arm around his student-athletes and having brief one-on-one conversations with them. When I asked him what they discussed, most of the time he was “just sharing how his day was and asking how their day was going”. On another occasion during the observations, I witnessed Coach Clark support and present a positive family structure through his program by providing encouragement and corrective feedback for one of his players who had made a major mistake. In fact, when discussing the County High School football program during their interviews, all participants compared it to a loving family.

Caroline, a parent volunteer shared the following during her interview:

He loves to have fun while he is showing them life. He takes the boys fishing; he has cookouts at his house for them; he will surprise them at practice with watermelon; during car washes he will squirt them with the hose; he isn't serious all the time.

During his interview, DJ discussed the family atmosphere he experienced as a former player,

I could tell that he really cared for us. Fun was a big part of it. We did football camps, trips to the lake where we had free time to swim or fish. We had cookouts, car washes, and watermelon nights in the summer when it was hot.



By establishing personal relationships, Coach Clark fostered a family-oriented culture for his student-athletes. In a local newspaper article from 2018, one of Coach Clark's former players was quoted, saying:

He's a very hard-working, humble person. He'll do anything for you if you really need help. He's always someone that you can call on the phone and depend on. He's like a second father. If my dad ain't (sic) around and I need someone to talk to, that's who I go to (Cates, 2018).

Mark had the following to say in his interview:

Coach was all about building relationships. He really took the time to get to know each of us and would always be asking questions to find out more about who we were as individuals, apart from football. He was about family and love. It was "forget about me, I love you". That was his approach to coaching.

Daryl had something very similar to say during his interview when describing Coach Clark's approach to creating a family-oriented environment at County High School,

Coach Clark used football to develop his players by building relationships with them, their families, and the community. He would use his players to connect with other players. He identified certain players on the team who needed extra guidance and would pair one of the leaders on the team with them to be a positive influence. Coach Clark understood the influence we had on each other and he managed that by bringing attention to players who were doing the right things and continued to work with those who were making bad decisions.

Along with the family picnics, cookouts, trips to the lake, and summer camps, several participants mentioned “Eagle Sunday” as a way Coach Clark worked to provide his players with a family-oriented atmosphere. Alex had the following to say in his interview:

On Sundays, we would meet up at local churches for Eagle Sunday. Coach Clark and the leadership committee organized different churches to attend throughout the year and whoever wanted to go would show up. Afterwards, we would go have lunch and it really showed guys who didn’t have that type of experience what a family looks like.

**Purpose beyond themselves.** A purpose beyond themselves was a concentration for Coach Clark, a noticeable theme across data sources and participants, and answered sub-question number three, how does Coach Clark address the spiritual development of his players through high school football at County High School. During the interview, Coach Clark stated, “We teach them that they’re not gonna do this on their own, they’re gonna do this with the team. Being on a team requires teamwork and we use that to help our players understand humility.” Daryl discussed his perspective during the interview,

Coach Clark wants to make sure that everyone realizes that they are a special part of the team, and that together they are doing something bigger than themselves, and that they are a part of something that is on a grander scale. He let each player know they (sic) were an intricate part to what the team was trying to do. He makes sure they understand that there is a bigger picture. He made sure to develop selflessness and communicate that someone was always relying on us, whether it be our teammates or our family. He is going to take advantage of the opportunity to keep building them up in their faith.

In an article published by a nearby city, the author reported on Coach Clark’s approach to selflessness by writing: “That, players and administrators say, is why they love their coach. And

that's also why this community has embraced Clark. They've seen him in action. They've watched as he helped others. And they say he's helped bring them hope" (Cates, 2016a, p.3). In the same article, Coach Clark is quoted as saying,

Our theme has become "The Power of One". We strive to be of one mind, one vision, and one team. Although we are individuals, we will choose to be selfless instead of selfish - remembering that our commitment to the team is more important than our individual feelings. This "Power of One" had meaning in our spiritual lives and helped to bring a hurting community together. Our football family represents the humility it takes as a team player to do what the acronym of the letters F, A, M, I, L, Y tell us to do. To us, these letters represented the statement: Forget About Me, I Love You, allowing us to put our teammates before ourselves (Cates, 2016a, p.5).

During his interview, Dr. Paul said,

He establishes that no one player is above the other. For Coach Clark, it is all about the power of one, one unit, one team, every single one of them, player to coach. The power of one is more important than any individual.

One of Coach Clark's former players, Manny, described the themes Coach Clark developed during his interview,

At the beginning of each season, Coach Clark would have a theme for that year. I think he would use the themes to focus our attention on the bigger picture. During my sophomore season we won our first state championship and the theme for that season was "power of one". I think he wanted to teach us that when people come together and work towards a common goal, there is more power in that than trying to do it on your own. So, he tried to develop teamwork, selflessness, and commitment. My junior year when we

won our second state championship in a row, the theme for that season was “believe”. I have to say, Coach Clark was a very spiritual man, so I think he wanted us to believe in each other and the team, but he also wanted us to believe in something bigger than ourselves. My senior year, which was our three-peat season, the theme for that season was “faith”. He wanted us to have faith that together we could do whatever we wanted if we did it the right way.

During the document analysis process, I uncovered an article related to one of the themes Coach Clark created for his program. In it, the author stated the following: “And the coach has a new slogan for 2016: Believe. Perhaps it’s a belief that the Raiders can repeat their title. Or maybe it extends to something deeper, to faith in each other and in a higher power” (Cates, 2016a, p.4). During the observations and while addressing his team, Coach Clark reminded his players about their time at an FCA camp that summer and stated, “We’re learning about God, we’re learning more about relationships and our spiritual life and that is extremely important; in fact, it means everything to me, period.”

Coach Clark’s main avenue for helping his players develop a sense of purpose beyond themselves was by providing opportunities for them to serve others. Coach Clark stated the following in our interview:

Healthy relationships require effort and balance, so I believe we develop that by teaching these kids how to serve. We teach them how to serve each other, serve the community, serve their teachers, and serve their families. We actually created a day called service day where the school is actually going to let every kid be involved because they've seen what the football team has done and they're going to make a whole day of it, no school work.

Everybody gets to sign up for a service and we are going to go out and serve the community that whole day, which is going to be amazing.

While discussing the support the County High School football program received from the town where County High School is located, Coach Clark is quoted in an article as saying,

We want to be something positive in this great community. We want our town to be strong and united. We desire to be more than a good football team; we want to be great community supporters and builders. We are looking for ways to give back and make positive imprints on our community. Your support for the team greatly impacts our team and our school. We are becoming a Power of One (Hamlett, 2015, p.1)!

Mr. Clay was quoted in an article published in 2016 covering the County High School football program's impact on their community, "It's absolutely amazing what Coach Clark has done for the football program and for the community, in terms of teaching these kids more than football by having them serve their community" (Cates, 2016a, p.4). During our interview, Coach Clark described an avenue he and his coaches use with his players to help them develop purpose beyond themselves,

I think one of the best ways to develop the whole player is by opening up your life to them and modeling acts of service. The going out together and working together to cut down trees or do yard work for people. When coaches are working with their players to serve others, like doing yard work, they are able to develop relationships with the kids outside of football. When they see you being honest, trustworthy, accountable, responsible, and having a good work ethic, they learn the importance of being those things.

**Builds resilience in players.** An emphasis on building resilience in his players was a consistent theme among all three data sources and answered sub-question number four, how does Coach Clark address the emotional development of his players through high school football at County High School. While discussing conflict resolution, Coach Clark stated the following in his interview:

We help our players learn how to control and use their emotions for the right things, not for the wrong things. We teach them that no matter what's going on in their lives, they can overcome it with hard work, dedication, and support.

Alex stated the following in the interview: “Mentally, Coach Clark challenged us to make the right decision in every aspect of our lives and provided support for those who were struggling.”

A former player of Coach Clark, Mark shared his perspective for how Coach Clark built resilience in his players,

He always gave us a chance to learn from our mistakes and make it right. He taught his players the right thing to do; even if they didn't do it, they knew what the right thing to do was. Coach Clark did not allow us to get away with little things because he taught us that those little things build up to bigger situations.

Dr. Paul, Coach Clark’s principal had this to say during the interview,

To help his players grow into becoming productive young men, I've seen him add more responsibility to his players, developing them to become self-sufficient, and by communicating to the parents and the kids that they need to take responsibility for their development.

While discussing Coach Clark’s approach to supporting his players’ resilience during the interview, Daryl said, “He was a very empathetic leader. If he knew what you were going

through, he would empathize by sharing his experience and how he dealt with it.” Manny also shared his thoughts for how he and his teammates were supported during the interview when he said, “Any time we were in a tough situation, he would always encourage us to believe in the work we put in and to believe in our teammates and those who supported us.” While discussing the way Coach Clark supports his players during tough situations, Coach Clark’s athletic director, Mr. Clay, stated the following: “Coach Clark was there for him [his player] when he lost his sister to a tragic accident to help him get through it.” During his interview, Troy had this to say,

Coach Clark demanded a certain type of excellence from you. He wanted to make sure we were mentally prepared for what we we’re going through at that time and what life would throw at us when we moved on from County High School.

After one of the practices, I observed Coach Clark address his team and applaud them for their resilience to finish with great effort under such tough circumstances (e.g., very difficult practice session in the summer heat). He then linked their experience with the type of resilience they will need to display when they are faced with the adversity that the upcoming season and semester would undoubtedly bring. The resilience of the County High School football players was evident during the 2015 season by the way members of the program responded to tragedy. In an article written about the first ever state championship for County High School, the author detailed how the community was burdened by multiple tragic deaths of young people, including current and former County High School students. In the process of losing friends and classmates, the high school football players provided healing for a hurting community who rallied behind them as they went on to an undefeated state championship season and their “Power of One” mantra (Cates, 2016b). Another example of the type of resilience the County

High School football players displayed was explained by Coach Clark's principal, Dr. Paul, during the interview when he stated,

In the years I have been here, we haven't had any football players get into fights. If anything, they help us break up fights. As a matter of fact, last year, one of the senior football captains got punched in the mouth and his front tooth was knocked out, and he walked away, he never threw a punch back. Another example is during a game, we were destroying a team and they were running their mouths and one of our kids lost it and committed a personal foul. After the play, it was a commotion. Coach Clark immediately brought all of his players together. There was no profanity; he just encouraged his players to not allow the other team to control their emotions. He patted the player on the head and went back to coaching.

**Year-round strength and conditioning program.** An emphasis on physically developing his student-athletes using a year-round strength and conditioning program was a recurring theme across participants and data sources and answered sub-question number five, how does Coach Clark address the physical development of his players through high school football at County High School. Troy, Coach Clark's former player and current assistant coach described Coach Clark's year-round strength and conditioning program during the interview when he stated,

For Coach Clark, player development is from January 1st to December 31st. He develops them through team building activities so they can build each other up. He gets them involved and they do things together as a team, like strength training, competing with one another, and community service. Physically, he uses the weight room and conditioning to get his players' bodies in the best shape they can.



During her interview, Caroline stated the following: “Physically, he challenges them in the weight room to get stronger and also educates them on the importance of eating right and getting plenty of rest.” While discussing Coach Clark’s approach to physical development, Mr. Clay stated the following in the interview: “Coach Clark works with the athletic trainer year-round to educate the kids on the dangers of performance enhancement drugs, illegal drugs, and alcohol.”

During his interview, Dr. Paul shared the following:

Along with being the head football coach, Coach Clark is also a health teacher so he understands how drugs and alcohol can impact the body, and he communicates that to his players by describing the negative impact those things can have on them physically.

During the observations, I witnessed Coach Clark discuss with his players the importance of “properly hydrating before, during, and after practice”, encouraging them to “stay away from fried foods and sodas”, and to “make sure to get at least seven hours of sleep per night”. Before each practice, I observed Coach Clark taking his student-athletes through a scripted warm-up and flexibility routine.

During the interview, Alex stated the following:

Physically, he challenged us in the weight room to get stronger. As football players, we were required to take a weight lifting class with Coach during the school day. In the off-season, Coach Clark would also have speed and agility training for players who were not involved in other sports. He would even give up his weekends to meet with players who needed some extra training. He also told us about the importance of eating right and getting plenty of rest. Coach Clark was also a health teacher, so we had discussions about our diet and the risks involved with doing drugs and drinking. I mean he knew we

would be tempted with those things, so he did his best to let us know the risk we were taking.

One of the documents Coach Clark shared with me was about his weight lifting competitions. As a team building activity, Coach Clark used his players' competitive nature to physically prepare them to compete in a weight lifting event. These competitions took place during the off season and also doubled as fundraisers for the County High School football program. During the observations, Coach Clark ended each practice session by discussing the seriousness of staying hydrated, communicating any injuries to him and the trainer for further examination, and reminding them to get plenty of food and rest for the next day. A local journalist described Coach Clark as someone who stressed the importance of having student-athletes who are willing to work hard in the weight room both in season and during the off season (Hamlett, 2014). In the same article, Coach Clark was quoted as saying, "We can't compete unless we work out, and if you can't compete because you're not physically able, it makes it tough" (Hamlett, 2014, p.2).

### **Research Question Responses**

This section provides answers to each of the six research questions introduced in Chapter Three. These responses were created based on the data collected. Direct quotations from participants in the interviews and observations as well as information gleaned from documents collected are included to succinctly answer each research question. These answers will give specific responses to the research questions.

**CQ:** How does Coach Clark address the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School?

Coach Clark's approach to developing the whole person during adolescence through high school football began and ended with love, was a player-by-player approach, and involved

Coach Clark modeling the traits he hoped to instill in his players. As members of the County High School football program, Coach Clark's players experienced a loving father figure in their head coach. Mark stated the following in the interview: "Coach Clark was like a second father to me. He focused on everyone around him. He never once put himself before anybody else." During the observations, I witnessed Coach Clark being patient with and kind to all his student-athletes regardless of their status on the team. During her interview, Caroline had the following to say about Coach Clark: "It doesn't matter if you are the star player or not, Coach Clark loves all of his players the same." Coach Clark protected, trusted, and honored his players and their role on the team.

**Sub-question 1:** How does Coach Clark address the cognitive development of his players through high school football at County High School?

Coach Clark addressed the cognitive development of his student-athletes by preparing them for life after high school. He structured his program to use their everyday life activities to practice a diverse set of skills like problem solving, resisting temptations, remaining focused, resolving conflict, and adjusting to the demands they encountered. When discussing how Coach Clark prepared his student-athletes for life after high school, Dr. Paul stated the following:

He instills in them humility, servanthood, teamwork, having good character, hard work, dedication, being someone people can trust, and love. He wants to develop them to be productive young men through football by having them serve their teammates, school, families, and community.

Mr. Clay, Coach Clark's athletic director had this to say during the interview, "Coach Clark supports his players and is all about coaching the entire athlete to develop life skills they can take with them later in life." Coach Clark prepared his players for life after high school by holding

them accountable for their actions and providing them opportunities to be responsible to those people who were depending on them (i.e., their family, teammates, coaches, teachers).

**Sub-question 2:** How does Coach Clark address the social development of his players through high school football at County High School?

Coach Clark addressed the social development of his players by creating a family-oriented environment through personal relationships. Coach Clark treated his players like they were his own children and his players referred to him as a father figure. Coach Clark described himself as a servant and someone who wanted to create a positive family environment through love. All the participants provided similar descriptions when describing Coach Clark's approach to coaching high school football at County High School. During the observations, I witnessed Coach Clark serve his team. For example, he set up the field before practice and cleaned it up after, filled water bottles before and during practice, and made sure he was the last one to leave the practice field in the event any of his players had questions, concerns, or just wanted to chat. During the shift in relations when his players began to develop closeness with their peers, Coach Clark organized the County High School football program to provide a family-oriented setting to provide guidance, support, and encouragement for them. Caroline, a parent volunteer stated the following: "During the season, Coach Clark and his coaches spend more time with the boys than we do. He will have group discussions with them before and after practices and games about social pressures and encourage them to do the right thing."

**Sub-question 3:** How does Coach Clark address the spiritual development of his players through high school football at County High School?

Coach Clark addressed the spiritual development of his student-athletes by helping them develop a sense of purpose beyond themselves to establish or confirm their beliefs and

commitments. Coach Clark designed the County High School football program so that each student-athlete was provided a role on the team and was depended on to fulfill their role. Doing so created a sense of ownership for something that was bigger than themselves (i.e., the County High School football program). During the observations, at the conclusion of each practice session, I observed players fulfilling their role on the team. After Coach Clark addressed the team, one of the players would begin the prayer and the rest of the team would bow their heads in prayer with their teammates. Through community service, Coach Clark provided his players with hands-on experiences for discovering a purpose beyond themselves and believed these experiences helped to develop the humility needed to think of the needs of others first. Coach Clark coached his players to think of the needs of their families, teammates, and friends, and believed by doing so they would develop a purpose beyond themselves.

**Sub-question 4:** How does Coach Clark address the emotional development of his players through high school football at County High School?

Coach Clark addressed the emotional development of his players by building resilience in them. He used high school football to encourage his players to adopt traits like openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extraversion. Coach Clark set a standard of excellence for his players and coached them to meet it. When his players fell short of the standard, he didn't lower the standard, he continued to support and encourage them until they met it. Through this process and their experiences (i.e., weight lifting sessions, practice sessions, games) as County High School football players, Coach Clark's players learned how to deal with disappointment and failure by accepting the support of others and continuing to work towards their goals and objectives.

**Sub-question 5:** How does Coach Clark address the physical development of his players through high school football at County High School?

Coach Clark addressed the physical development of his student-athletes by creating a year-round strength and conditioning program around the needs of his players. Coach Clark's student-athletes are allowed to take a certain number of electives throughout their high school careers and part of the requirement for participating in the County High School football program is taking Coach Clark's weight training class every semester. Coach Clark's strength and conditioning program included in-season and off-season weight lifting, flexibility and conditioning programs, injury prevention and rehab programs, recommendations for proper hydration, sleep habits, caloric intake, supplement use, and a balanced diet. Coach Clark encouraged his players to play other sports and accommodated them while they were involved in other sports by adjusting his strength and conditioning program to meet their specific needs.

### **Summary**

The themes identified in this study investigating how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football were Loving his players, Player-by-player approach, Life after high school, Family-oriented, Purpose beyond themselves, Builds resilience in players, Year-round strength and conditioning program; and, they helped in answering the six research questions related to how Coach Clark addressed the development of the high school football players who had been entrusted to him. In the study, it was found that Coach Clark took a player-by-player approach to WPD and did so from a platform of love. Through love, acceptance, and modeling a heart of servanthood, Coach Clark created an atmosphere that was open and accepting. In turn, his players wanted to perform for him in all areas of their lives.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study is to describe how Coach Clark addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School. This chapter summarizes the findings by briefly restating the answers to the research questions from Chapter One. The empirical and theoretical discussions are presented and used to identify the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications of the study. The delimitations and limitations of the study are identified, and recommendations for future research are made. Finally, a brief summary reviews the chapter and the study.

### **Summary of Findings**

The central research question asked how Coach Clark addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School. Coach Clark addresses WPD through high school football by loving and serving his players, being a consistent and positive example, intentionally structuring his program to teach individualized life skills, and by providing his student-athletes with community service and leadership opportunities. No matter the setting, the leading factor contributing to the positive development of adolescents is relationships with dedicated and loving adults (Bowers, Johnson et al., 2015). Described as a positive father figure by himself and the other participants, Coach Clark is committed to being an example of love to his players.

The first sub-question asked how Coach Clark addresses the cognitive development of his players through high school football at County High School. Coach Clark addresses the cognitive development of his players by taking a player-by-player approach to teaching them how to focus on the task at hand, process the information they receive, and to make the very best

decision based on the information they have. As key participants in their own development (Piaget, 1983), adolescents' learned behavior will impact their cognitive development (Wang, 2018). Coach Clark purposefully plans for teaching his players how to handle their current life situations in a positive way while also preparing them for life after high school football.

The second sub-question asked how Coach Clark addresses the social development of his players through high school football at County High School. Coach Clark addresses the social development of his players by creating a family-oriented atmosphere where his players can experience love and discipline in a controlled environment. Throughout the teenage years, youth begin to develop intimate relationships with their peers (Noam et al., 2014). Coach Clark uses the high school football setting to model open and trusting relationships and encourages his players to engage in relationships with like-minded people.

The third sub-question asked how Coach Clark addresses the spiritual development of his players through high school football at County High School. Coach Clark addresses the spiritual development of his players by taking an individualized player approach. Through his high school football program, Coach Clark provides his players with experiences that require them to put others before themselves and to unite with teammates for a common goal and purpose. His intention is to help them create or strengthen their personal values and obligations while directing them towards wise decision making. An adolescent's spirituality is a key ingredient for psychological development (Harley & Hunn, 2015). Coach Clark believes instilling humility and providing his players with opportunities to serve and lead others is a positive way to help develop their spiritually.

The fourth sub-question asked how Coach Clark addresses the emotional development of his players through high school football at County High School. Coach Clark addressed the



emotional development of his players by building resilience in them and teaching each player how to understand and express emotion. The transitional stage of adolescence is a meaningful time for the development of emotional skills (Haas et al., 2018). By taking a concentrated plan of attack, Coach Clark models composure, and creates opportunities to build resilience in his players. Coach Clark deliberately creates chaotic situations so his players can practice understanding the situation and making the very best decision at that moment.

The fifth sub-question asked how Coach Clark addresses the physical development of his players through high school football at County High School. Coach Clark addresses the physical development of his players through his year-round strength and conditioning program. An appropriate strength and conditioning program, proper nutrition, and the maintenance of a suitable body mass index will lead to greater physical development and favorable school functioning (Edwards & Cheeley, 2016). Each of Coach Clark's players is required to take his weight lifting and health courses as a student-athlete at County High School. Although the health course is only one semester, most of Coach Clark's students reenroll in his weight lifting class each semester.

### **Discussion**

The theoretical discussion uses the framework of the five Cs of PYD theory developed by Lerner, Lerner, and their colleagues (Geldhof et al., 2015; Lerner et al., 2005; Overton, 2014). The five Cs of PYD are discussed in relation to this current study. In the empirical discussion, information from Chapter Two is used to show similarities and differences to previous research related to the current study.

## **Theoretical Discussion**

The study was based on Lerner and colleagues' (2005) five Cs of PYD: competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring. In this study, Coach Clark addressed the five Cs of PYD theory by identifying the individual needs of his players and creating a plan based on his findings. Lerner et al. (2005) defined competence as a "positive view of one's actions in domain specific areas including social, academic, cognitive, and vocational" (p. 23). To develop his student-athletes' competence, Coach Clark used their daily experiences to teach them how to resolve conflicts; make the right decisions; be accountable for their grades, test scores, and attendance; and replicate the standard he expected for applying a great work ethic.

Confidence was defined by Lerner et al. (2005) as "an internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy" (p. 23). For this study, Coach Clark developed self-confidence in his student-athletes by teaching them how to fulfill their responsibilities. Coach Clark would create and bring attention to occurrences for identifying problems in their lives. Once the problem was identified, Coach Clark taught his players how to determine the most appropriate way to resolve the issue and to ultimately fulfill their role in the situation which, if learned produced self-confidence and a sense of individual power.

While defining the connection factor of the five Cs of PYD theory, Lerner et al. (2005) described it as "positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in bidirectional exchanges between the individual and peers, family, school, and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship" (p. 23). Throughout this study, Coach Clark modeled and taught his players how to connect with others by investing in them and inspiring them to do the same. Coach Clark provided opportunities for his players to serve their families, classmates, and community. Through these interactions, his student-athletes experienced positive exchanges

with the people they served and developed a greater sense of connection with them, and in turn received support and encouragement from them.

Character was defined by Lerner et al. (2005) as “respect for societal and cultural rules, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong and integrity” (p. 23). Using humility as a platform, Coach Clark taught his student-athletes the importance of having a sense of responsibility or concern for the problems and injustices of society. Within the community and through his program, Coach Clark utilized their experiences to help his players appreciate cultural diversity. Coach Clark partnered with parents, school staff, and community members to create and foster positive values and morals in his student-athletes.

Lerner et al. (2005), defined caring as “a sense of sympathy and empathy for others” (p. 23). Described by one of the participants as an empathetic leader who looks out for the needs of others, Coach Clark willingly opened his personal life up so his student-athletes could experience an example of someone who was kind, compassionate, and considerate. For example, Coach Clark invited the players into his home on a regular basis for meals and companionship with him, his wife, and their children. During these visits, Coach Clark hoped his players would experience him as a consistent example of someone who sought to understand the feelings of others and that he was the same type of person at home with his family.

### **Empirical Discussion**

To support and promote PYD, youth should experience positive relationships with adults, be taught and practice life skills, and be given opportunities for leadership (Agans et al., 2015; Agans et al., 2016; Holt et al., 2017; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). No matter the setting, youth who encounter relationships with dedicated and loving adults are more likely to experience positive development (Bowers, Johnson et al., 2015). As a servant leader, Coach Clark is attentive to the

needs of his student-athletes, he shows concern for them, and he is committed to helping them be the very best people they can be. Through this style of leadership, he is considered a positive father figure by his former players. Troy stated the following in the interview: “To me, he reminds me of like (sic) a father because he loves you but when you do wrong, he is going to discipline you.” Through this developmental relationship, Coach Clark collaborates with his players to help them progress, while holding them accountable for their own development. Coach Clark stated the following during his interview: “We believe accountability is huge for self-development. It's on them.”

When teaching and practicing life skills with adolescents, sport psychologists recommend doing so with a needs-supportive motivational climate and integrating three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Hodge et al., 2013). In this study, Coach Clark used a servant leadership style of coaching by placing the ambitions, desires, and interests of his student-athletes above his own, being attentive to their needs, and showing concern for them to create a needs-supportive motivational climate while implementing life skills training for his student-athletes. Coach Clark addressed autonomy with his student-athletes as a group by offering them possible consequences for choices made, by providing them with alternative choices to various scenarios they experience, and by creating ownership for their role in making the right decision at that time. Individually and after choices were made, Coach Clark discussed the outcomes for choices they made, provided them with decision-making options for future reference, and implemented some form of discipline to encourage his players to make better decisions. During her interview, Caroline stated the following:

He will talk to the player and give him many opportunities to change his behavior. Any time the player's choices hurt the team, the player is temporarily removed from the team and provided an opportunity to come back if he makes better choices.

Coach Clark supported the development of competence in his student-athletes by consistently communicating the goals and procedures for his program and constantly provided feedback and support to them. Dr. Paul stated the following in the interview: "Coach Clark models good communication and encourages his players to meet the standard he has for them." Coach Clark also fostered relatedness through high school football at County High School through the team's "Power of One" theme. In a local newspaper article, Coach Clark is quoted as saying, "Our theme has become 'The Power of One.' We strive to be of one mind, one vision, and one team" (Hamlett, 2015). When youth believe they are an important part of a group that is reciprocally caring, they are likely to experience relatedness (Hodge et al., 2016).

Sport psychologist Gould (2016), recognized youth leadership as a complex process that requires collaboration with proven leaders, youth who want to lead, and opportunities for encouraging them for an extent of time. On an annual basis, Coach Clark selects 14 student-athletes who serve as members of the County High School football leadership committee. During his interview, Coach Clark stated the following:

Prior to and during our summer camp, we identify potential players who display great character, self-leadership and self-development. Our leadership committee is not always our best athletes; it's just players who have been identified as those who may be positive leaders for our team on and off the field.

Considered captains of the team, these 14 players may serve as tutors for the team, help organize and lead community service events, collaborate with Coach Clark to decide the team's theme for that season, lead pre-practice and pre-game exercises, and lead team meetings.

### **Implications**

This section outlines the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications of the current study. The theoretical implications relate to the factors of Lerner's five Cs of PYD theory. The empirical implications relate to the implications of this study in comparison to the five Cs of PYD theory. The practical implications address ways this study can be used to help all stakeholders.

#### **Theoretical Implications**

The theoretical implications of this study relate to the five Cs of PYD theory: competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Lerner et al., 2005). When the five Cs are viewed in relation to this study, it is revealed that when Coach Clark's student-athletes graduate his program, they have been exposed to the five Cs of PYD, and therefore are more likely to experience WPD through high school football at County High School. As a result of Coach Clark's approach to WPD during adolescence, some participants (e.g., former players, current assistant coach) in this study confirmed their own development of identical and similar traits of the five Cs of PYD, while other participants (e.g., current principal, athletic director, team volunteer) shared their perspective for how Coach Clark uses high school football to develop traits identical and similar to the five Cs of PYD theory.

Coach Clark designs his high school football program to love and serve others. Amid this approach, he models love and service to his family, players, the school, and community while providing resources and opportunities for his players to successfully do the same. The

type of love Coach Clark demonstrated to his student-athletes is founded in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (New International Version), “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” By loving and serving others in this way, Coach Clark’s student athletes were more likely to experience the five Cs of PYD (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring) and WPD (i.e., cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical development) during adolescence through high school football.

### **Empirical Implications**

Characteristics identified by specialists in youth development for advancing PYD are positive adult–youth relationships, teaching and building life skills, and opportunities for leadership (Holt et al., 2017; Lerner et al., 2017; Vest Ettekal et. al., 2016). As a result of this study, it was revealed that by structuring his program for loving and serving others, Coach Clark’s high school football players experienced a positive developmental relationship with him, were provided opportunities to develop and apply life skills, and were afforded leadership and community service opportunities. Consequently, the likelihood of Coach Clark’s student-athletes becoming productive members of society was increased. A former player of Coach Clark’s, Daryl, stated the following in his interview:

He has molded guys who did not have the best upbringing and didn’t come from much into young men who have gone on to attend college and are doing great things. Coach Clark changed the narrative of their lives just by staying connected with them and building them up through his program.

Leaders in the PYD movement take a strength-based perspective, and view adolescents as having resources to be developed, rather than problems to be fixed (Holsen et al., 2017; Holt et al. 2017; Lerner et al., 2017). As a result of this study, it was revealed that Coach Clark takes an individualized approach for each player by learning about their background and family dynamic. During his interview, Coach Clark stated the following:

We have to understand that not all of these kids are going to be brought up the same way. So, we have to respect and understand that. In most cases, we will not change a bad situation with their family, but most likely, it will continue. What we can do is help to change our players' behavior for their future and their future families.

Parents are most often an adolescent's primary and most prominent relationship (Bowers, Johnson et al., 2015). Coach Clark reaches out to the parents through annual picnics, parent meetings, and community service events to communicate his vision for developing their sons and to partner with them in this effort. In situations where his student-athletes are making decisions that are hindering their overall development, Coach Clark has driven to the homes of his players to discuss his concerns with family members. Coach Clark stated the following in his interview:

At the beginning of every year we have a picnic and we get all of them there, usually because we have tons of food. Afterwards we have our parent meeting to go over our guidelines. Throughout the year, we have a father-son fishing trip. We have a mother football camp where they get to come out and we take them through drills, so they can learn the positions their sons play. So, I mean, just connecting with them helps. It's the parents that you don't get at those things that are sometimes hard to reach, so I go to the homes. I've been told to leave the house and told don't come back. I've heard some really



bad, nasty things because I have tried to reach out and talk to some parents about some things that their kids are doing and I need their help.

Current literature identifies positive adult–youth relationships as one of three characteristics necessary for promoting PYD (Agans et al., 2015; Agans et al., 2016; Holt et al., 2017; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). Further, these bidirectional relationships have been identified by scholars as critical to the developmental outcomes of youth (Bowers, Johnson et al., 2015; Holt et al. 2017; Lerner, Lerner et al., 2015; Pierce, Gould, & Camiré, 2017; Whitley et al., 2019). In particular, the coach-athlete relationship has been defined by scholars as a circumstance where athletes and coaches are unified through four key interdependent relational constructs: closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation (Jowett & Shanmugam, 2016; Yang & Jowett, 2017). The findings of this study extend the current literature on the coach-athlete relationship and coaching WPD by highlighting another interdependent relational construct, love. The results of this study showed that coaches and student-athletes who loved each other with patience, kindness, generosity, humility, and who forgave, honored, protected, and trusted one another experienced both PYD and WPD.

### **Practical Implications**

To affect positive and holistic development in the lives of high school student-athletes, each person (i.e., parent, student-athlete, and coach) involved must identify their role in the mutually beneficial relationship (Agans et al., 2016). The role parents play in the relationship with their high school football player and coach is a supportive one. As potentially the greatest influence on WPD during adolescence, parents play an important role in the overall development of their children. By providing support and encouragement for their child's role in their own development, and the coach's role in helping to develop their child, the student-athlete's

confidence may grow, opening them up to be more trusting of those who are in a position of leadership over them. By partnering with high school football coaches who are committed to the overall development of their children, parents can confirm and support the teachings of the coach and provide additional opportunities for the development of their child.

For this study, the role of the student-athlete was to trust and follow the plan Coach Clark had in place for them. By loving and serving others, his players contributed to their families, team, school, and community. Adolescents who contribute to their families, communities, and to society will attain the sixth C, contribution (Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner et al., 2014; Lerner, 2018). Student-athletes who want to take responsibility for their own development could begin by seeking community service opportunities. This study suggested that high school football players who loved and served others experienced both PYD and WPD while also becoming positive contributors to their community.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that high school football coaches who want to develop the whole person during adolescence through high school football should love their players, take a player-by-player approach, and serve as role models. Realistically, high school football coaches should treat their players as they would their own children and accept the role of father figure. Additionally, high school football coaches should take an ongoing individualized player approach to learning about the student-athlete's circumstances and adjusting their methods based on their findings. It was also found that modeling the types of traits Coach Clark hoped to instill in his student-athletes meant more to them and motivated them to behave the same way.

For coaches interested in using high school football to cognitively develop their student-athletes, this study suggests that they should prepare them for life after high school.

Specifically, high school football coaches should structure their program to teach and provide opportunities for practicing accountability, responsibility, effective communication skills, and hard work. For example, high school football coaches should ensure that each player is provided a role on the team, is responsible for their role, and is accountable to their teammates for working hard to fulfill their role. This study revealed that when high school football players were successful fulfilling their role on the team by being accountable, responsible, great communicators and hard workers, they were prepared for life after high school and experienced cognitive development.

This study found that by creating a family-oriented environment for their players, high school football coaches provided opportunities for their student-athletes to experience proper social development. It is recommended that high school football coaches construct a family-oriented environment for their players through personal relationships grounded in transparency and trust. For example, high school football coaches could invite players into their homes for team meals and bonding. While in this setting, it is recommended that high school football coaches include their own families and present a positive family structure to their players.

The findings from this study advocate for the spiritual development of high school football players by helping them develop a sense of purpose beyond themselves. To do that, it is recommended that high school football coaches provide their players with opportunities to serve others. For example, high school football coaches could organize community service events to help their players focus on the needs of others while providing opportunities for them to work together to fulfill those needs. Also, the findings from this study suggest that high school football coaches should provide ongoing reassurance to their players for their necessary role on the team and during community service events. This study revealed that when high school

football players believed that they were needed, they developed a sense of purpose beyond themselves and were spiritually developed.

To emotionally develop high school football players, the results of this study propose that high school football coaches should build resilience in their players. To build resilience in high school football players, it is recommended that high school football coaches set high standards for their players and guide them through the process of working towards meeting those requirements. For example, high school football coaches could structure a period during one of their practice sessions to include a very difficult game type scenario. During these scenarios, high school football coaches should take notes detailing who effectively handled the situation and who did not. With this information, high school football coaches could reinforce resilience in their players by providing additional responsibility for those who were successful in those difficult scenarios while also providing corrective feedback for those who didn't handle the difficult situation as well.

This study revealed that the physical development of high school football players was enhanced through a year-round strength and conditioning program. For high school football coaches interested in the physical development of their players, it is recommended that they develop a year-round strength and conditioning program around the needs of their players. To facilitate this program, high school football coaches should create a strength training class and require their athletes to take the course throughout the school year. For example, high school football coaches should work with the school's administration and scheduling department to create strength training courses for all student-athletes and confirm that their football players are registered for the course during the fall and spring semesters.

The results of this study suggest that high school football coaches should begin by loving and serving their families, student-athletes, school, and community. Coach Clark approached these relationships with humility and authenticity. For high school football coaches who want to develop the whole person through high school football, it is necessary to recognize humility as a strength rather than a weakness. Humility requires a willingness to be realistic with their role as coaches, acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, be willing to allow others to support them in their weaknesses, and place the needs of the team above their own. Authenticity requires vulnerability and transparency. Coach Clark accepted his role as an example and was committed to being honest with himself and others while fulfilling his role as a husband, father, and coach.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

The current study included several delimitations, the first of which was my theoretical proposition that if properly designed, high school football may offer adolescents essential developmental skills to operate as and become respected members of society while offering opportunities for WPD during adolescence. Using my proposition as a guide, I began reviewing relevant literature which aided in constructing and defining my research questions. As a result, I chose a (Type 1) holistic single-case design using Coach Clark as a specific real-life case to serve as the actual demonstration of my proposition. Using Coach Clark as a single unit of analysis, I bounded my case based on his time as the head coach at County High School. Another delimitation was the sampling of participants. I purposefully selected participants who were over the age of 18 because I believed they would more confidently be able to communicate their perspective for how Coach Clark addressed WPD during adolescence at County High School.

This study included several limitations. First, the study is limited geographically. The perspective of the participants from County High School may be unique to that particular high school; the approach to WPD during adolescence through high school football may not occur universally across all schools. Another limitation is the use of the single-case design. Although this type of design provides a thick, rich description of Coach Clark as the single unit of analysis, it does not allow for generalizations to cases that are not similar. Finally, fewer participants also limited this study. While 10 participants gave thick and rich data, and themes were obvious across all participants, the small number of participants reduced the trustworthiness of the study, including dependability and transferability (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The current single case study focused on how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School. While the data were strong, it only offered insight on a small number of participants in a small rural town in the southeastern part of the United States. One recommendation for future research would be to increase the number of participants in a similar study. For example, a study with a purposeful sampling pool of 24 that focuses on how high school football coaches from the southeastern part of the United States address the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football could be conducted.

Another recommendation for future research would be to use the above sampling pool of 24 in a multiple-case study to utilize several different case studies to illustrate WPD during adolescence through high school football. When choosing the settings for the multiple-case study, it is recommended to select six states from the southeastern part of the United States. The six cases could consist of six pairs of subjects, one high school football coach and three of his

former players. Using a multiple-case study approach will require the use of a multiple bounded system, or unit of analysis.

Finally, it is recommended to include populations that are diverse. For example, when selecting the setting, choose two rural, suburban, and urban communities for a total of six settings. It is also recommended to purposefully sample all five social classes (i.e., upper, upper-middle, middle, working and lower) when selecting those settings. Using a larger sample size from more than one state, a multiple-case study approach, and varying the social class of the participants may provide different results from case to case for the use of developing the whole person during adolescence through high school football.

### **Summary**

This study explored how Coach Clark addressed the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at County High School. The data for the study were collected from interviews, documents, and observations. After an analysis of the data, eight themes emerged: Loving his players, Player-by-player approach, Life after high school, Family-oriented, Purpose beyond themselves, Builds resilience in players, Year-round strength and conditioning program. The results of this study corresponded with previous literature and found that former players of Coach Clark underwent a positive developmental relationship with him, were given opportunities to develop skills they are still applying in life today, and were afforded opportunities to lead and serve their community increasing the likelihood of WPD through high school football at County High School.

For this study, loving and serving others was the foundation for Coach Clark's approach to WPD during adolescence through high school football at County High School. Coach Clark was committed to loving his players by being a patient, kind, humble, and trustworthy example

for them. He also displayed love to his student-athletes by honoring, protecting, and trusting them, with hope and perseverance as they walked through the developmental process together.

By loving his players in this way, they wanted to perform for him and model his behavior.

Through community service events and their day-to-day service opportunities at County High School, Coach Clark's student-athletes improved their possibilities of developing the five Cs of PYD (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring) and WPD (i.e., cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical development), improving their chances of becoming model citizens in their community.



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## APPENDIX A: School District Permission to Contact Letter

06/05/2019

Dr. [REDACTED]  
 Superintendent  
 [REDACTED] County Public Schools  
 [REDACTED] Street  
 [REDACTED], VA [REDACTED]

Dear Dr. [REDACTED]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education. The title of my research project is Fostering Whole Person Development through High School Football: A Case Study. The purpose of my research is to describe how Coach [REDACTED] addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at [REDACTED] High School. Currently, I serve as a Teacher and Coach at Harrison High School in Kennesaw, Georgia and I am a 17-year veteran of public school education.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research in the [REDACTED] county public school district at [REDACTED] County High School.

The participant will be emailed a google form to complete a background and demographic survey and will contact me to schedule an interview. The participant will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,  
 Joshua Cassidy, Ed.S  
 Doctoral Candidate, Teacher & Coach

**APPENDIX B: School Permission to Contact Letter**

07/10/2019

Dr. [REDACTED]  
Principal  
[REDACTED] County High School  
[REDACTED] Ave  
[REDACTED], VA [REDACTED]

Dear Dr. [REDACTED]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education. The title of my research project is Fostering Whole Person Development through High School Football: A Case Study. The purpose of my research is to describe how Coach [REDACTED] addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at [REDACTED] High School. Currently, I serve as a Teacher and Coach at Harrison High School in Kennesaw, Georgia and I am a 17-year veteran of public school education.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at [REDACTED] County High School.

The participant will be emailed a google form to complete a background and demographic survey and will contact me to schedule an interview. The participant will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,  
Joshua Cassidy, Ed.S  
Doctoral Candidate, Teacher & Coach

**APPENDIX C: Coach [REDACTED] Recruitment Letter**

07/19/2019

Mr. [REDACTED]  
Head Football Coach  
[REDACTED] County High School  
[REDACTED] Ave  
[REDACTED], VA [REDACTED]

Dear Coach [REDACTED]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education. The title of my research project is *Fostering Whole Person Development through High School Football: A Case Study*. The purpose of my research is to describe how you address the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at [REDACTED] High School. Currently, I serve as a Teacher and Coach at Harrison High School in Kennesaw, Georgia and I am a 17-year veteran of public school education. I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are willing to participate, you will be asked to complete a background and demographic survey, a web based interview, and provide documentation and archival records related to your time as the head football coach at [REDACTED] High School. It should take approximately three hours for you to complete the procedures listed. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, you will be required to complete and return a consent form. I will email you the consent form and include specific instructions for how it should be returned to me. In the same email, I will also include a background and demographic survey to be completed and returned with the consent form. Finally, I will include potential dates and times for our interview in the same email. I ask that when you respond with the consent form and the background survey, you include a date and time that is most convenient for you, even if it is not one of the dates I listed. My email address is [jdcassid@liberty.edu](mailto:jdcassid@liberty.edu) and my cell phone number is [REDACTED].

The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please sign the consent document, scan it and return it to [jdcassid@liberty.edu](mailto:jdcassid@liberty.edu) two weeks prior to our interview.



## APPENDIX D: Participant Recruitment Letter

07/19/2019

Mr. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] County High School  
[REDACTED] Ave  
[REDACTED], VA [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education. The title of my research project is Fostering Whole Person Development through High School Football: A Case Study. The purpose of my research is to describe how Coach Clark addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at [REDACTED] High School. Currently, I serve as a Teacher and Coach at Harrison High School in Kennesaw, Georgia and I am a 17-year veteran of public school education. I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are willing to participate, you will be asked to complete a background and demographic survey, a web based interview, and provide documentation and archival records related to Coach Clark's time as the head football coach at [REDACTED] High School. It should take approximately three hours for you to complete the procedures listed. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, you will be required to complete and return a consent form. I will email you the consent form and include specific instructions for how it should be returned to me. In the same email, I will also include a background and demographic survey to be completed and returned with the consent form. Finally, I will include potential dates and times for our interview in the same email. I ask that when you respond with the consent form and the background survey, you include a date and time that is most convenient for you, even if it is not one of the dates I listed. My email address is [jdcassid@liberty.edu](mailto:jdcassid@liberty.edu) and my cell phone number is [REDACTED].

The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please sign the consent document, scan it and return it to [jdcassid@liberty.edu](mailto:jdcassid@liberty.edu) two weeks prior to our interview.

## APPENDIX E: Coach Clark Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional  
Review Board has approved  
this document for use from  
7/18/2019 to 7/17/2020  
Protocol # 3875.071819

### Coach [REDACTED] CONSENT FORM

Fostering Whole Person Development through High School Football: A Case Study  
Joshua Cassidy  
Liberty University  
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study to describe how you address the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at [REDACTED] High School. You were selected as a possible participant to provide your perspective for how you use high school football to develop the whole person during adolescence. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Joshua Cassidy, a doctoral candidate in the school of education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

**Background Information:** The purpose of this study is to describe how you address the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at [REDACTED] High School. The central research question is seeking to understand how you use high school football to address the development of the whole person during adolescence at [REDACTED] High School. For this study, whole person development will be comprised of the following components: cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical development.

**Procedures:** By participating in the study and signing below, you agree to the following:

1. I understand that I am agreeing to participate in a research project and that the purpose of the study is to describe how I address the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at [REDACTED] High School. I will be asked a series of interview questions and the investigator will record my answers. There will be 15 individuals invited to participate in this study. Participants all meet the criteria of having firsthand experience with how you address WPD during adolescence through high school football at [REDACTED] High School. My name will not be associated with any of the research findings used and the confidentiality of my responses will be protected. The entire procedure will take 2-3 hours. My participation will take place in a private area with only the researcher present. I can decline to answer any question.

**Risks:** The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

The Liberty University Institutional  
Review Board has approved  
this document for use from  
7/18/2019 to 7/17/2020  
Protocol # 3875.071819

### **Benefits:**

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study would be discussing and thinking of ways to develop the whole person during adolescence. These discussions should help all stakeholders when integrating such practices into their interactions with teenagers and young adults.

Benefits to society include developing adolescents to become productive members of society.

Liberty University will not provide medical treatment or financial compensation if you are injured or become ill as a result of participating in this research project. This does not waive any of your legal rights nor release any claim you might have based on negligence.

**Compensation:** Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study. However, a letter of appreciation and acknowledgement will be sent to each of the participants involved.

**Confidentiality:** The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- I cannot assure participants that other participants will not share what was discussed with persons outside of the interview.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your high school. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or to withdraw at any time.

### **How to Withdraw from the Study:**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number provided in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

**Contacts and Questions:** The researcher conducting this study is Joshua Cassidy. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [jdcassid@liberty.edu](mailto:jdcassid@liberty.edu), or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Marilyn Gadowski at [mlgadows@liberty.edu](mailto:mlgadows@liberty.edu).

The Liberty University Institutional  
Review Board has approved  
this document for use from  
7/18/2019 to 7/17/2020  
Protocol # 3875.071819

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:** I have read and understand the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

---

Signature of Participant

Date

---

Signature of Investigator

Date

## APPENDIX F: Other Participant Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional  
Review Board has approved  
this document for use from  
7/18/2019 to 7/17/2020  
Protocol # 3875.071819

### Participant CONSENT FORM

Fostering Whole Person Development through High School Football: A Case Study

Joshua Cassidy  
Liberty University  
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study to describe how Coach [REDACTED] addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at [REDACTED] High School. You were selected as a possible participant to provide your perspective for how Coach [REDACTED] uses high school football to develop the whole person during adolescence. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Joshua Cassidy, a doctoral candidate in the school of education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

**Background Information:** The purpose of this study is to describe how Coach [REDACTED] addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at [REDACTED] High School. The central research question is seeking to understand how Coach [REDACTED] uses high school football to address the development of the whole person during adolescence at [REDACTED] High School. For this study, whole person development will be comprised of the following components: cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical development.

**Procedures:** By participating in the study and signing below, you agree to the following:

2. I understand that I am agreeing to participate in a research project and that the purpose of the study is to describe how Coach [REDACTED] addresses the development of the whole person during adolescence through high school football at [REDACTED] High School. I will be asked a series of interview questions and the investigator will record my answers. There will be 15 individuals invited to participate in this study. Participants all meet the criteria of having firsthand experience with how Coach [REDACTED] addresses WPD during adolescence through high school football at [REDACTED] High School. My name will not be associated with any of the research findings used and the confidentiality of my responses will be protected. The entire procedure will take 2-3 hours. My participation will take place in a private area with only the researcher present. I can decline to answer any question.

**Risks:** The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

The Liberty University Institutional  
Review Board has approved  
this document for use from  
7/18/2019 to 7/17/2020  
Protocol # 3875.071819

**Benefits:**

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study would be discussing and thinking of ways to develop the whole person during adolescence. These discussions should help all stakeholders when integrating such practices into their interactions with teenagers and young adults.

Benefits to society include developing adolescents to become productive members of society.

Liberty University will not provide medical treatment or financial compensation if you are injured or become ill as a result of participating in this research project. This does not waive any of your legal rights nor release any claim you might have based on negligence.

**Compensation:** Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study. However, a letter of appreciation and acknowledgement will be sent to each of the participants involved.

**Confidentiality:** The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- I cannot assure participants that other participants will not share what was discussed with persons outside of the interview.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your high school. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or to withdraw at any time.

**How to Withdraw from the Study:**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number provided in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

**Contacts and Questions:** The researcher conducting this study is Joshua Cassidy. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [jdcassid@liberty.edu](mailto:jdcassid@liberty.edu), or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Marilyn Gadowski at [mlgadows@liberty.edu](mailto:mlgadows@liberty.edu).

The Liberty University Institutional  
Review Board has approved  
this document for use from  
7/18/2019 to 7/17/2020  
Protocol # 3875.071819

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:** I have read and understand the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

---

Signature of Participant

Date

---

Signature of Investigator

Date

**APPENDIX G: IRB Approval Letter****LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 18, 2019

Joshua Cassidy

IRB Approval 3875.071819: Fostering Whole Person Development Through High School Football: A Case Study

Dear Joshua Cassidy,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. [45 CFR 46.101\(b\)\(2\)](#) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,



*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
**Research Ethics Office**



*Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971*



**APPENDIX H: Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative**

Completion Date 03-Apr-2019

Expiration Date 02-Apr-2022

Record ID 31133696

This is to certify that:

**Joshua Cassidy**

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

**Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher** (Curriculum Group)**Social & Behavioral Researchers** (Course Learner Group)**1 - Basic Course** (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

**Liberty University**Verify at [www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wad04cd39-8ff3-455a-9f2c-645ffd1fbc14-31133696](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wad04cd39-8ff3-455a-9f2c-645ffd1fbc14-31133696)

## APPENDIX I: IRB Signature Page

### INVESTIGATOR AGREEMENT & SIGNATURE PAGE

BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT, THE INVESTIGATOR AGREES:

1. That no participants will be recruited or entered under the protocol until the Investigator has received the final approval or exemption email from the chair of the Institutional Review Board.
2. That no participants will be recruited or entered under the protocol until all key personnel for the project have been properly educated on the protocol for the study.
3. That any modifications of the protocol or consent form will not be initiated without prior written approval, by email, from the IRB and the faculty mentor/chair, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the participants.
4. The PI agrees to carry out the protocol as stated in the approved application: all participants will be recruited and consented as stated in the protocol approved or exempted by the IRB. If written consent is required, all participants will be consented by signing a copy of the approved consent form.
5. That any unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others participating in the approved protocol, which must be in accordance with the Liberty Way (and/or the Honor Code) and the Confidentiality Statement, will be promptly reported in writing to the IRB.
6. That the IRB office will be notified within 30 days of a change in the PI for the study.
7. That the IRB office will be notified within 30 days of the completion of this study.
8. That the PI will inform the IRB and complete all necessary reports should he/she terminate University Association.
9. To maintain records and keep informed consent documents for **three years** after completion of the project, even if the PI terminates association with the University.
10. That he/she has access to copies of 45 CFR 46 and the Belmont Report.

Joshua Cassidy  
Principal Investigator (Print)



6/25/2019  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Co-Investigator (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Co-Investigator (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### FOR STUDENT PROPOSALS ONLY:

BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT, THE FACULTY MENTOR/CHAIR AGREES:

1. To assume responsibility for the oversight of the student's current investigation, as outlined in the approved IRB application.
2. To work with the investigator, and the Institutional Review Board, as needed, in maintaining compliance with this agreement.
3. To monitor email contact between the Institutional Review Board and principle investigator. Faculty mentors/chairs are cc'ed on all IRB emails to PIs.

4. That the principal investigator is qualified to perform this study.
5. **That by signing this document you verify you have carefully read this application and approve of the procedures described herein, and also verify that the application complies with all instructions listed above.** If you have any questions, please contact our office ([irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu)).

MARILYN GADOMSKI  
*Faculty Mentor/Chair (Print)*

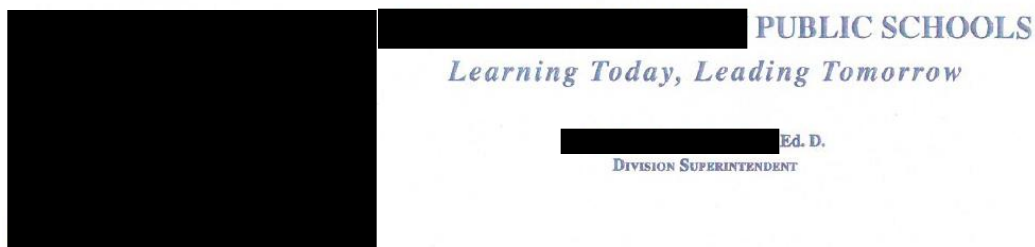
*Facu*

*Date*

6/25/2019

//  
\*The Institutional Review Board reserves the right to terminate this study at any time if, in its opinion, (1) the risks of further experimentation are prohibitive, or (2) the above agreement is breached.

## APPENDIX J: School District Permission Letter



SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS: June 10, 2019



Joshua Cassidy  
Doctoral Candidate



Dear Mr. Cassidy,

After discussing your research proposal entitled *Fostering Whole Person Development through High School Football: A Case Study*, I can grant you permission to contact our faculty/staff, specifically the Head Football Coach, the Principal, the Athletic Director, and an assistant football coach at [REDACTED] High School to invite them to participate in your study with the following stipulations. We understand participation is voluntary, and no participant will be financially compensated for their time. Although you plan to observe the coach during school hours, the study will involve no direct interaction with current students or athletes enrolled at [REDACTED]. Also [REDACTED] Public Schools, [REDACTED] High School, our employees, and all students will remain anonymous and unidentifiable in the final written research project, and /or future articles or presentations related to this study.

CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF:



Upon IRB approval and successful defense of your research proposal, you have agreed to keep me, the Superintendent of [REDACTED] informed about the timeline and process you will be using to complete your research in [REDACTED].

I wish you the best in your research and the completion of your dissertation and doctoral degree.

Sincerely,




Dr. [REDACTED]  
Superintendent  
[REDACTED] Public Schools


**APPENDIX K: Local School Permission Letter** HIGH SCHOOL  


July 19, 2019

Joshua Cassidy  
Doctoral Candidate




Dear Joshua Cassidy:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled Fostering Whole Person Development through High School Football: A Case Study, I have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at  High School.

Sincerely, 



, Ed. D.  
Principal

**APPENDIX L: Coach [REDACTED] Background and Demographic Survey**

1. How long have you been coaching?
2. When did you start coaching?
3. Why did you start coaching?
4. What is your overall win-loss record?
5. What is your record at the school you are currently coaching?
6. Who influenced you to become a coach?
7. What characteristics did he or she possess to make you want to coach?
8. Do you have other roles in the school besides coaching? (athletic director, teaching, PE, etc.)
9. What is the typical make-up of your team? (number of seniors, juniors, etc.)
10. How big is your high school? (number of students)
11. What is the racial/ ethnic make-up of your team?
12. Is that consistent with the make-up of the school?
13. Are the teams that you compete against generally similar in size and diversity?
14. What is your age?
15. What is your ethnicity/race?
16. What is your highest level of education?

**APPENDIX M: Participant Background and Demographic Survey**

1. How long have you known Coach [REDACTED]?
2. What is the nature of your relationship with Coach [REDACTED]?
3. What is your age?
4. What is your ethnicity/race?
5. What is your gender?
6. What is your highest level of education?

**APPENDIX N: Observation Protocol**

Time	Description (Raw Data)	Interpretation (Patterns/Trends)	Reflection (Feelings/Opinions)
1:00	Pre-Practice  Dynamic Warm Up	Proper warm up  Corrective feedback	Very Detailed  Player Led
1:10	Conditioning  Shuttles	Safety  Encouragement	Very Positive  Motivating
1:25	Water	Rest and Recovery	Time for Coach Clark to “love” on his players
1:30	Tackling Drills  Turnover Drills	Fundamentals	Provided Examples
1:50	Individual Drills  Offense	Position Specific	High Standards
2:20	7 on 7 Drills  Team Period	Offensive Scheme	Expected Excellence  Repeated until it was correct
3:00	Post Practice  Closing Remarks	Large Group Discussion  Team Prayer	Joy through the struggle  Embrace the work



**APPENDIX O : Interview Log**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Length</b>
Coach Clark	07/18/2019	84:20
Dr. Paul	07/18/2019	63:24
Mr. Clay	07/19/2019	35:05
Caroline	07/19/2019	39:04
Daryl	07/19/2019	34:43
Alex	07/20/2019	43:50
Troy	07/20/2019	64:26
DJ	07/20/2019	46:32
Manny	07/21/2019	54:53
Mark	07/21/2019	39:38

**APPENDIX P: Research Journal Excerpt**

After reading through this journal and reflecting on my notes, here are characteristics of Coach Clark that may contribute to his approach to WPD during adolescence: Discipline, Patience, Kindness, Father figure, Great example, Great communicator, Supportive, Detail-oriented, Accountable, Responsible, Hardworking, Humble, Composed, and Hopeful.

After reading through this journal and reflecting on my notes, here are characteristics of Coach Clark's program that may contribute to his approach to WPD during adolescence: Power of One, Faith in each other, Eagle of the year award, Eagle Sunday, Study hall, Developing relationships, Summer camps, Community gatherings (i.e., picnics, cookouts), Community service, Weight room class, and Proper nutrition.

## **APPENDIX Q: Documents Collected**

### **1. Individual Documents:**

- Photographs from the observation:
  - Coach Clark picking up a piece of trash from practice field
  - Coach Clark preparing water for his players before and during practice
  - Coach Clark setting up the field with practice equipment before practice
  - Coach Clark cleaning up the practice equipment after practice
  - Downtown area
  - The PO1 symbol on a downtown piece of art
  - The County High School football facilities
  - Team prayer after practice (no revealing photos)
  - “Eagle” award plaque
  - “Eagle” award framed jersey hanging in main entrance of County High School
  - Blanket made of T shirts from the 2015 State Championship team
  - T Shirts with the power of one theme
- Videos:
  - 2015 end of the year team highlight video with game film, interviews, and pictures
  - 2016 end of the year team highlight video with game film, interviews, and pictures

- 2017 end of the year team highlight video with game film, interviews, and pictures

**2. Community documents:**

- 14 newspaper articles covering County High School football and Coach Clark
- Three video recorded interviews of Coach Clark from local news stations
- One video recorded interview of Coach Clark from a local University

**3. Internet group documentation:**

- Seven Facebook posts
- Three twitter tweets

**4. County High School football program documents:**

- Habitudes – Images that form leadership habits & attitudes study guide
- Coach Clark's leadership curriculum
- 9<sup>th</sup> grade football orientation schedule
- Big Brother agreement
- Building a winning culture through high school football clinic presentation
- Weight lifting competition
- Code of ethics
- Counselor – Player meeting form
- Player evaluation form
- Football staff organization guidelines
- Homework assignment sheet
- Implementing a strong football program clinic presentation

- Parent letters
- NCAA Eligibility forms
- Pre Game meal letters
- Principles of coaching high school football clinic presentation
- Progress reports for teachers to complete
- Progress reports for coaches to complete
- Recruiting information for student-athletes

### APPENDIX R : Coding Worksheet

NVivo Code	Theme
Father Figure	Loving his players
Being an example	
Discipline	
Kind	
Patient	
Protecting	
Individually	Player-by-player approach
Support	
Needs of his players	
Ask questions	
Progress reports	
Know them	
Accountability	Life after high school
Responsibility	
Communication	
Eagle of the year award	
Hard work	
Study hall	
Personal relationships	Family-oriented
Open	
Honest	
Trust	
Accepted	
Serving others	Purpose beyond themselves
Power of One	
Humility	
Believe	
Faith	
Understanding and expressing emotion	Builds resilience in players
Composure	
Right decision	
Demanded excellence	
Weight lifting class	Year-round strength and conditioning program
Flexibility	

Speed and agility	
Rehab	
Nutrition	
Supplements	
Balanced diet	
Caloric intake	

**APPENDIX S: Eagle Award Plaque and Framed Jerseys**



## APPENDIX T: Eagle Award Plaque

