

## IMPACT OF THE KINESIOLOGY CAREER CLUB: A TPSR-BASED POSSIBLE FUTURES PROGRAM FOR YOUTH IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

IMPACTO DEL CLUB PROFESIONAL DE KINESIOLOGIA: UN PROGRAMA SOBRE FUTUROS POSIBLES PARA JOVENES DE COMUNIDADES DESFAVORECIDAS BASADO EN EL MODELO TPSR

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a 10-week implementation of the Kinesiology Career Club (KCC), a TPSR-based physical activity program. The primary goal of KCC was to help youth envision and discover meaningful, positive “possible futures”. The program took place at a low performing inner city high school in a large metropolitan city. The participants were 14 freshmen, 14 to 15 years of age, recruited from a second period physical education class. A qualitative approach to program evaluation was used to examine the impact of KCC. Qualitative data sources included field observations, participant daily journal entries, and in-depth interviews with the participants. Results indicated that the program helped participants connect the TPSR goals of respect, effort, goal-setting, and leadership skills to their possible futures; envision and explore a career in kinesiology; and link kinesiology to their own positive possible futures. Results were mixed in demonstrating balanced hopes and fears as suggested by the theory of possible selves. This study extends the development, implementation, and research of Hellison’s TPSR. While TPSR has been considered an exemplary youth development model, this study is only the second attempt with “possible futures” as the main emphasis (Walsh, 2008). Findings indicate that KCC is an effective TPSR program; however, it is still in its infancy and requires further research.

### RESUMEN

El propósito de este trabajo es examinar la eficacia de un programa de actividad física basado en el modelo TPSR de 10 semanas de duración llevado a cabo por el Club Profesional de Kinesiología (KCC). El objetivo prioritario del KCC es el de ayudar a los jóvenes a visualizar y descubrir “futuros posibles”

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positivos y con sentido. El programa se desarrolló en una escuela secundaria de bajo rendimiento académico del centro urbano de una gran ciudad. Los participantes fueron 14 alumnos de primer curso de secundaria (14-15 años), reclutados en la clase de EF. En la evaluación del programa, para valorar el impacto del KCC, se usó un enfoque cualitativo. Entre las fuentes de información cualitativa empleadas se encuentran las observaciones de campo, los comentarios de los participantes en sus diarios y las entrevistas en profundidad con los participantes. Los resultados indican que el programa ayudó a los participantes a conectar los objetivos del TPSR de respeto, esfuerzo, establecimiento de objetivos y cualidades de liderazgo con sus futuros posibles. También muestran el desarrollo de un equilibrio entre la esperanza y el miedo, tal como sugiere la teoría de los “yos posibles”. Este estudio amplía el campo de implementación e investigación del modelo TPSR de Hellison. Aunque el TPSR es considerado un modelo ejemplar en el desarrollo juvenil, el presente trabajo es sólo el segundo en el que los “futuros posibles” (Walsh, 2008) constituyen su foco principal. Los resultados indican que el KCC es un programa eficaz de TPSR; sin embargo, está aún en sus inicios y se requiere más investigación.

**KEYWORDS.** Possible futures; careers; TPSR; underserved youth; at-risk youth; youth development.

**PALABRAS CLAVE.** Futuros posibles; carrera profesional; TPSR; jóvenes desfavorecidos; juventud en riesgo; desarrollo juvenil.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The ability to imagine the adult one could become is part of the developmental process for high school students (Oyserman, Terry & Bybee, 2002). They can think hypothetically, which allows them to visualize possible futures (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984), but the educational system does not effectively connect present school involvement with adult futures (Yowell, 2002). On their own, youth must creatively imagine this connection, and link current behavior to future adult selves. This is a difficult process—more so for minority youth in underserved communities—due to fewer positive local role models, and a higher exposure to unemployment, poverty, crime and other social risk factors (Tsoi-A-Fatt, 2008). Lacking a clear plan of how current involvement in school facilitates achieving desired adult future selves, youth are at higher risk of school failure, school dropout, and subsequent unemployment or marginal employment (Battin-Pearson, Newcomb, Abbott, Hill, Catalano, & Hawkins, 2000).

Brown and Jones (2004) describe this “achievement gap”—the consistently and persistently poorer academic achievement of minority youth—as one of the most pervasive and pernicious outcomes of the educational process in the United States.

Conversely, youth with school-focused possible selves are at a reduced risk of involvement in delinquent activities, attain better school outcomes, and feel more connected to school (Oyserman, Harrison, & Bybee, 2001). Similarly, tenets within the field of youth development include helping youth with both vocational and avocational skill development, which could enhance their positive possible selves through promoting student-adult relationships to navigate the adolescent stage of life

(Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, & Jones, 2005). Hellison's (2011) Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model (TPSR) is a well-known youth development model that has been used throughout the United States and in several other countries to systematically integrate life skill development within physical activity based programs. Walsh (2008) developed the first TPSR-based "possible futures" program. This program involved the conceptualization, creation, implementation of, and research on "Career Club," a program that sought to promote the development of detailed, plausible, academically focused possible selves that could help youth feel involved and connected with both school and their future possible selves. This initial attempt was effective in providing a meaningful career exploration of coaching as a possible future. In addition, data suggested that linking these coaching experiences to elements necessary for the realization of these youths' choices for future orientation also occurred (Walsh, 2008).

Based on lessons learned from the original Career Club, an updated version was created called the "Kinesiology Career Club" (KCC), which aimed to help high school freshmen (first-year students) envision, contemplate, and explore meaningful possible futures decisions. Kinesiology is "the academic discipline which involves the study of physical activity and its impact on health, society, and quality of life" ([www.AmericanKinesiology.org](http://www.AmericanKinesiology.org)). The more specific goals of KCC are as follows: 1) Helping participants connect the TPSR goals of respect, effort, goal-setting, and leadership skills to their possible futures; 2) Helping participants envision and explore a career in kinesiology and make connections to their own positive possible futures; and 3) Helping participants balance their hopes and fears as suggested by the theory of possible selves. The purpose of this article is to present findings from a program evaluation study undertaken to examine the effectiveness of a 10-week implementation of the Kinesiology Career Club.

## 2. METHOD

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The impact of KCC was examined by drawing on a qualitative approach to program evaluation, which relies on interactional, adaptive, and judgmental abilities of the human inquirer (Greene, 2000). Patton (2002) asserts that the selection, design, and implementation of evaluation methods should be flexible based on practical needs and situational responsiveness. KCC provided intensive descriptive data from the participants and program leaders. Making use of semi-structured interviews, field observations, and participant journal entries, the overall objective of this study was to uncover the program's impact on the participants, determine what program goals were met, and suggest improvements for future KCC implementation.

## 3. SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

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KCC ran for 10 weeks during the spring 2011 semester at a low performing inner city high school in a large west coast metropolitan city of the United States. The school has a diverse population with the following breakdown: 14% African American, 23% Asian, 46% Latino, 9% White, and 8% other. KCC took place during second period physical

education class every Tuesday and Thursday and ran for 75 minutes. The class had approximately 50 students who were mostly freshmen and sophomores. The class had only five freshman girls, all of whom were recruited for the program. The physical education teacher randomly assigned five boys, and an additional four boys who seemed to need extra help because they were not performing well academically, getting in trouble in school, or having various difficulties at home. In total, there were 14 participants in the program (nine boys and five girls 14 to 15 years of age), all of whom also agreed to be in the study.

The first author is an Associate Professor in the Department of Kinesiology at San Francisco State University (SFSU) and was the creator and lead instructor of the program. At the time of the study he had 16 years of experience running TPSR programs. The second author of the study is an Assistant Professor at SFSU and served as a research consultant for the study. The third author was an assistant instructor in the program, a graduate student at SFSU at the time of the study, and had two years of experience running TPSR programs. KCC is also part of a service learning internship for eight SFSU undergraduate kinesiology seniors who were selected to help run the program. The interns mentored either one or two of the participants and helped them fill out their KCC participant workbook/journal.

#### 4. KINESIOLOGY CAREER CLUB PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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The physical activity content for KCC was a combination of martial arts, weight training, dance, and fitness activities. KCC included TPSR's prioritization of the instructor-student relationship through the concern for each student's emotional, social, and physical well-being. KCC was empowerment-based by providing students with various leadership roles, a voice in the program's direction, and the opportunity to evaluate themselves and the program. KCC also aimed to help participants explore, become aware, and self-evaluate experiences related to contemplating their positive "possible futures".

Specifically relevant to KCC was the theory of possible selves, which is based on those components of the self that represent "what we would like to become" (hoped-for-selves) and "what we are afraid of becoming" (feared-selves). The theory of possible selves was created to complement conceptions of self-knowledge with representation of individual goals, motivational factors, fears, and anxieties (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). According to this theory, the balance between hoped-for-selves and feared-selves enhances motivation and regulates the direction of behavior. Essentially, a given hoped-for-self will have maximal motivational effectiveness when balanced by a possible feared-self within the same domain. A possible feared-self, therefore, represents what could happen if a desired state is not realized, and is most effective as a motivational resource when balanced with a positive hoped-for-self, thus providing the motivation to avoid the feared outcome. Heightened motivation is fostered by the ability to counter future failure worries or fears with detailed images of attaining desired outcomes (Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002).

KCC progressed through the following four phases. For a detailed description of each KCC phase, the TPSR and KCC similarities and differences, and various KCC documents see Walsh (2012).

**Phase One Goals.** Use TPSR daily format and strategies to introduce the program, including the various physical activities. This phase focuses on Level 1, respect, and Level 2, effort. We aim to begin building relationships with the participants, have them voice their opinions about the program content and structure, and introduce the field of kinesiology. We also introduce the combined TPSR reflection time and mentoring time. Mentoring time is a significant component for the positive “possible futures” emphasis that takes place throughout the program. We talk about our own choice to study kinesiology, connect the physical activities in KCC to the foundation of the field of kinesiology, and encourage the students to talk about their own career interests. We also bridge Levels 1 and 2 to being successful in kinesiology.

**Phase Two Goals.** Phase two begins to empower students to take on the advanced TPSR responsibilities of Level 3, goal-setting and Level 4, leadership. Participants are asked to set goals in martial arts, weight training, dance, or fitness activities. They are also encouraged to take on small leadership experiences, and teach the activities they worked on during goal-setting time. We encourage them to consider a career in at least one of the many sub-disciplines of kinesiology (e.g., sport psychology, physical education, exercise physiology), connect the physical activities and goal-setting and leadership in the program to being successful in the field of kinesiology, and chart the steps to earning a college degree in kinesiology.

**Phase Three Goals.** Phase three continues to empower participants to work on TPSR Levels 1-4. Goal-setting time and leadership roles are extended with more responsibility. We introduce the potential transference of the steps to a career in kinesiology to the necessary steps for the students' future careers of choice. The objective is to link phase two experiences of understanding how to be successful in kinesiology to understanding how to be successful in their own careers of choice. Participants actively reflect on what they would like to pursue as a career, and effectively discover ways to link what they learned about kinesiology to their own future career interests. We also introduce the importance of having both potential hopes and potential fears—as suggested by the theory of possible selves (see **Table 1**, p. 224, for specific participant examples)—and having the work ethic, positive attitude, and preparation needed to be successful.

**Phase Four Goals.** Phase four continues to empower participants to work on TPSR Levels 1-4. We introduce Level 5, outside the gym, and address how what they do in school, home, and in the streets impacts their futures. Phase four discussions focus solely on participants' careers of choice. We further reinforce the connection between TPSR Levels, and what might prove necessary for the practical realization of their possible futures, including both potential hopes and fears. We provide additional insight into the degree of hard work, positive attitude, and preparation needed to realize their possible futures. We continue and complete charting the steps for their careers of choice, and provide extra documentation related to their choices.

## 5. DATA COLLECTION

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Pseudonyms were used for all participants and consent was obtained to conduct the study through the Institutional Review Board. A qualitative approach to program evaluation was used to examine the impact of KCC. Qualitative data sources included semi-structured interviews with the participants, field observations, and participant journal entries. Interview questions were created based on the goals of the program, including concepts from the theory of possible selves. The third author developed a draft of the interview guide, which was then refined by the first and second authors. There were 15 questions in the guide. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. Twelve of the 14 participants were interviewed. Two of the participants were not able to be interviewed due to the school year ending. A few sample questions were, "What Kinesiology career was most interesting to you?" and "What does it take to achieve your careers of choice?" Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and were conducted by the third author on school grounds during the school day at the end of the program. The third author also wrote field notes immediately after each KCC session. They included session goals, participants present, session narratives (i.e., description of events), and session observations. Because the first author was the main instructor of the program and had to focus on running the program, the third author was able to write parts of the field notes during TPSR awareness talks and group meetings, at times capturing nuanced quotes from the participants. At the end of every session, participants had TPSR reflection time in the form of a written workbook/journal. Participants evaluated their performance on the TPSR responsibilities, provided written comments on these responsibilities, and answered various questions about kinesiology careers of interest and personal careers of interest. The workbooks were kept in a locked cabinet in the room where the program took place and then brought to the university to be analyzed once the program ended.

## 6. DATA ANALYSIS

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After data collection and transcriptions were completed, all data were reviewed several times in order to develop a final coding scheme using a combination of *a priori* categories and categories which emerged inductively from the data (Denis, Lamothe, & Langley, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Walsh, Ozaeta, & Wright, 2010). The *a priori* categories were based on the goals of the KCC program. First order themes correspond to these categories, while the findings from the inductive data analysis are represented by the subthemes. In this sense, the program goals provided structure for the initial stage of the data analysis process. After several rounds of refinement and data reduction, prominent patterns were identified that characterized the data. Several strategies to establish trustworthiness were integrated in this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These included peer debriefing, data triangulation, checks for disconfirming evidence, and audit trail. Peer debriefing occurred primarily with the field observations between the first and third authors. As the program instructors, they had a shared experience and tacit familiarity with the data that facilitated this process. After every

session, the third author wrote the daily observations and shared the final write-up with the first author. When conflicting thoughts arose, they would talk about the session and come up with a final decision to capture the most accurate depiction of the session in the write-up.

Triangulation was achieved by collecting the three separate data sources (interviews, field observations, and journal entries) and securing multiple perspectives on the same phenomenon. While each participant offered a unique perspective, a concerted effort was made to identify and present both data that aligned strongly and data that provided disconfirming evidence. Finally, an audit trail was conducted by the second author who was not directly involved in the program implementation. This researcher reviewed materials and was an integral part of the research planning, including the original research plan, interview protocols, transcriptions, various versions of the coding scheme, and validation of the key findings.

## 7. RESULTS

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The following three *a priori* themes guided to what degree KCC helped participants envision and explore positive “possible futures”: 1) Helping participants connect the TPSR goals of respect, effort, goal-setting, and leadership skills to their possible futures; 2) Helping participants envision and explore a career in kinesiology and make connections to their own positive possible futures; and 3) Helping participants balance their hopes and fears as suggested by the theory of possible selves.

*1) Helping participants connect the TPSR goals of respect, effort, goal-setting, and leadership skills to their possible futures.*

Every participant was able to give several examples of what each of the TPSR goals mean and how they applied them in KCC. However, this study aimed to connect the TPSR goals to their possible futures. Seven of the 14 participants directly connected respect, and 11 of the 14 participants directly connected the other three TPSR goals of effort, self-direction/goal-setting, and leadership as relevant and helpful for their futures. Data represented the connection in the following three ways: a) success in high school and future college experiences, b) direct connection to kinesiology, and c) direct connection to employment and careers of choice.

1.a) Success in high school and future college experiences

Six of the participants connected the TPSR goals to helping them in school and five to future college experiences. Most of the data in this category came from the interviews, with additional data from journal entries. George said when interviewed, “By respecting your teachers or coaches, they are more likely to help you with a letter of recommendation.” Raymond related effort to school when interviewed: “[KCC] help me think about school, because in [KCC] you got to work hard and push yourself, just like in school, when you don’t want to take a test you still got to push yourself to try and succeed.” Becca said, “[KCC] helped me think about high school and my future college experience when we talked about our careers and how respect and effort

help you in college and in life." George realized how hard he will have to work in college when stating, "If you are in college, there is [sic] going to be a lot of kids that are already good and know how to do this stuff. You will have to work and try harder than them."

Goal-setting was related to tasks in high school and to preparing for college. Marius said, "I'm setting goals right now by trying to finish high school, do my homework, and staying out of trouble." Natalie said when interviewed, "Goal-setting means to commit to something and stick to that. In KCC the number one goal was to increase my GPA and I actually succeeded. I was 2.17 and now I am 3.42 and it feels good!" Kamila said, "[KCC] got me to think more, because having the conversation with our mentors helped me set some goals. It gave me advice, so that when I get toward senior year I will be ready for college." Jose said, "My favorite part about the program was getting my goals ready for college." Becca said, "It will help me set goals now. If I want to go to college I will have everything planned out, and then I can set another goal like getting a master's degree."

#### 1.b) Direct connection to kinesiology

Connecting the relevance of TPSR goals to a successful future in kinesiology was one of the phase two KCC goals. Eight of the 14 participants represented data in this category, all of which came from their journals. Hard work and tenacity were stated for succeeding in studying kinesiology. Shawn wrote, "I learned it isn't easy to major in kinesiology and that effort and respect is a key part of achieving your goals." Nora wrote, "It is fun and I learned that kinesiology requires effort, and good leadership," and later added, "Kinesiology can help me think about other careers by setting goals for myself, and helped me reach higher." Raymond wrote, "What I learned about kinesiology was it takes time to get there and it takes hard work." Becca noted, "Kinesiology helps me to think about the respect and effort I need to put into any career I choose and it helps me to set goals." Jose echoed this theme when he wrote, "I learned different ways of getting to my goal which also relates to kinesiology," and "Kinesiology and my career both include effort, leadership and the ability to provide success." Natalie stated, "Kinesiology connects my career because it's teaching me how you need to respect to get respected." Damon wrote, "Kinesiology helped me with my career because it taught me [to] try harder."

#### 1.c) Direct connection to employment and careers of choice

Directing the relevance of TPSR goals to their own careers of choice began in phase three of KCC and continued throughout phase four. Eleven of the 14 participants were represented in all three data sources for this theme. Damon said when interviewed, "When you get a job, they don't want to hire anybody who is disrespectful, and always cursing and screaming at them." Nora reflected, "I will get a good reputation from the managers, and the head of the companies I work for. I need to respect my boss, my co-workers." During an awareness talk, Shawn said, "You respect your boss because you don't want to get fired." When interviewed he stated, "You have to dedicate yourself and show a lot of respect to those higher than you." Jose wrote, "It has me



thinking that pursuing your career is not an easy thing to achieve so you need to really try." George journaled, "I learned that there is a lot of work and you'd have to put a lot of effort into the thing that you want to become." Julio said when interviewed, "I want to be a firefighter and if I don't know how to use a certain tool, I will need to provide effort to learn how to use all of the equipment." Nora also commented, "I want to become a doctor. It will take a lot of hard work, effort and leadership. I won't be lazy, I won't like lag behind other people." Raymond claimed when interviewed, "I'm trying to be a professional football player. Effort means a lot in football because you can't be lazy and you have to push yourself." Furthermore, Shawn said, "You have to put a lot of effort into your job and into your life so you don't end up being lazy. You can gain respect from your boss. This is the exact same in school."

The direct connection to the employment and careers category had the most data representing leadership. Becca said in an awareness talk, "Goal-setting and leadership are good. You're gonna have a boss and learn from other people, and teach and lead other people." Maggie wrote in her journal, "I think this program helps me lead in the future and in my career." Leadership was also directly tied to the KCC activities. Damon said when interviewed:

"When I led the weight station it was fun. I never got to be a leader in high school or middle school. This experience helped me because I started to become a real leader and you could start your own business by working hard".

Jose said, "In martial arts I lead. I could also be a vice president of the company, so leadership is really important." Becca added, "Being a leader will help my boss notice me and then eventually I will get the opportunity for advancement." Julio said, "Leadership will help me teach and lead others in my future job." Nora explained:

"When we did the stations, I led sometimes. I never really tried to be a leader so it was a positive experience that could help me if I want to be a president or a leader in a company."

Jalil noted when interviewed, "I was leading in high school [KCC]. I will be more experienced and will be able to do better in coaching because I have experience."

*2) Helping participants envision and explore a career in kinesiology and the linking to their own positive possible futures.*

Beyond the TPSR goals, envisioning and exploring a career in kinesiology was a strategy that began in phase two. It was not important that they made kinesiology a definitive career choice for themselves, but rather used the experience as a platform to begin envisioning and exploring their own positive possible futures. We aimed to have them pick at least one of the many sub-disciplines in kinesiology as a potential choice so that we could help them practice learning the steps to obtaining a college degree in a specific career. We also described the activities in the program as practicing being a "kinesiologist". In phase three we began connecting the steps learned in kinesiology

toward their own career choices (e.g., need to stay in school and finish high school; the first two years of college are the same for everyone). It was important that they were able to pick at least one of their own careers of interest so that we could also help them learn the detailed steps to actualize their own careers of choice. Both the path to kinesiology and their own path began where they currently are in their lives—9th graders who are 14 to 15 years of age. We taught them that what they were currently doing in school and other areas of their lives impacts achieving their dreams (e.g., staying out of trouble, going to school, studying). In addition to connecting the TPSR goals to helping them in their futures, part of the path to these careers included exploring and envisioning specific tasks that will help their positive possible future. While each participant varied in their own detailed paths throughout the ten weeks, all but one of the participants progressed as planned. The differences among the participants were evident in the degree of detail in their personal progression and the intensity of their initial interest in kinesiology. Thirteen of the 14 participants have data represented in this theme in a three-fold process: a) envision and explore kinesiology; b) make the “connection” between kinesiology and their own careers of choice; c) reflect on and describe strategies to help their positive possible future.

#### 2.a) Envision and explore kinesiology

Becca wrote, “I think kinesiology as a career is good, I don't want to be a kinesiologist, but I appreciate the fact kinesiologists care about others' fitness.” Jose wrote, “Kinesiology is hard to do but really works out body and mind.” He also said when interviewed, “I might study kinesiology in the future. It could be one of my options.” Julio wrote, “I'm thinking kinesiology as a career in the future.” Damon said when interviewed, “The kinesiology career that was the most interesting was a physical therapist. I want to help injured players,” while Marius wrote, “Learning about kinesiology makes you want to pick it as a major in college.” Natalie talked about her interest when interviewed: “Sports Psychology. I probably have to go to college and then get internships in sports psychology. Then get a two year master's degree.” When interviewed Raymond specified, “Sports management. You got to go to college and you have to have a certain GPA. You have to have above a 3.0 to get into [certain] sports management programs.” Shawn remarked during an awareness talk, “I really like to run, and am considering kinesiology as a career because I want to coach track and be a physical education teacher.”

#### 2.b) Make the “connection” between kinesiology and the participants' own careers of choice.

Shawn had the clearest understanding of how all college degrees have similarities. His quote captures how we tried connecting the tasks for earning a degree in kinesiology to any major:

“I can major in basically anything. It doesn't have to be in anything sports related. To become a coach you only have to have a degree. But to go to college you have to graduate high school and take ACT's and SAT's. The first two years of college are exactly the same for everyone and I can

basically major in anything I want to. I could use that [degree] and apply for a job as a sports coach or athletic director."

Becca wrote, "I learned that kinesiology is good for your mental health and I want to be a psychiatrist." Julio wrote, "In the future I want to be [a] firefighter, and it relates a lot to kinesiology. I want to get a degree in kinesiology and then going [sic] to a firefighter school." Marius "learned that careers involving kinesiology get paid good money." He also wrote, "Kinesiology can help me with a sports career." Maggie wrote, "I learned that kinesiology could help you go to medical school." In another journal entry she added, "I learned that kinesiology would connect to my career by learning about the body." Raymond wrote: "Kinesiology connects well with my career options."

2.c) Reflect on and describe strategies to help their positive possible future.

When interviewed, Becca said, "It will take a lot of years of college, and I will need to get myself physically in shape and stop doing harm to my body...I have to study and balance out my life." Jose reflected when interviewed:

I am more serious about school now since I've been in [KCC]. This is a real world, not like the cartoons. I am going to college and I am going to be fine. I am trying to get more scholarships and prepared for college.

Julio said, "Before, I wasn't really sure if I was going to go to college, but now I'm like, I want to go!" He added, "[The mentors] helped us by explaining what classes I needed to take in order to graduate from high school." George wrote, "I'm starting to take school and sports more serious so that I'll be prepared for the future and there's many different steps to achieving your goals." He said during an awareness session:

You got to have a plan a, plan b and c, if something doesn't work, like being a professional athlete [plan a], you go to another plan [plan b] playing basketball, and if that does not work then you have [plan c] getting a job.

Jalil said, "[KCC] helped me look and see what my grades have to be for college." Kamila explained, "It helped me to do better, and not to give up when certain things, like if I get frustrated because I can't do something." Marius pointed out that, "[KCC] made me want to come to school and not miss days," and noted:

Electrical engineers work with math and stuff. You got to be really smart at math. I also want to go into business in the future, get my own company. That would take hard work and dedication to do what you love. You also need to go to college.

Maggie wrote, "I learned to be what I want and I'm getting my algebra grade up. Volunteering in the hospital can prepare me for my career." Nora said when interviewed, "[KCC] made high school more fun, and I wanted to come to school more, to be active and play. So now I am excited about going to college." Natalie

acknowledged the influence of KCC in a journal entry: "I learned about life in this program. I feel confident and I'm not afraid to try new things and I can handle myself and any situation like an adult thanks to you all." Raymond said, "[KCC] helped me to think about what college I want to go to. I also learned about the requirements to get into particular colleges. I got to do well in high school before going to college."

3) *Helping participants balance their hopes and fears as suggested by the theory of possible selves.*

While it was not until phase three that we stressed the importance of exploring a balance of both their hoped-for selves and feared-for-selves as suggested by the theory of possible selves (Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002), we had discussions before, during, and after the program sessions where the participants could talk about these concepts. The importance of this balance was also reinforced in their daily journals. As noted by Walsh (2012: 63), "While it is important to acknowledge both hopes and fears, the discussions focus more on the potential hopes, and acknowledge the importance of understanding and identifying potential fears". We documented both hopes and fears in program observations, journal entries, and interviews.

**Table 1.** Participant Hopes and Fears

Participants	Sessions	Hopes & Fears	Hopes	Fears	Example Hope	Example Fear
Becca	15	A	5	3	I want to be a psychiatrist.	I am afraid to grow up and be on dope.
Damon	7	A	5	6	I want to be an auto mechanic.	I'm afraid to become homeless.
Gabe	20	A	6	3	A professional basketball player.	Ending up on the streets.
Natalie	20	A	11	4	Fashion designer.	I am afraid of drugs and alcohol.
Jose	20	B	9	2	A graphic designer.	Work in fast food like Mc Donald's.
Jalil	18	B	9	3	Carpentry or an auto mechanic.	I don't want to get shot.
Kamila	13	B	4	3	Physical Therapy.	Bad addictions.
Marius	17	B	12	2	Get my GPA up.	Becoming a nobody in the future.
Nora	20	B	8	3	A doctor to help people.	A gangster or something bad.
Shawn	19	B	7	3	Fitness Trainer and Coach.	Not getting a job or becoming homeless.
Ethan	18	C	2	0	Study music and science.	(None Stated)
Julio	20	C	10	0	Become a firefighter.	(None Stated)
Maggie	19	C	6	0	I want to be surgeon.	(None Stated)
Raymond	17	C	3	0	A football or basketball player.	(None Stated)

A: Expressed hopes and fears right away.

B: Expressed hopes right away but expressed fears part way through or at the end of the program.

C: Only expressed hopes and never expressed fears.

Four of the participants were able to express both hoped-for-selves and feared-selves right away (see Group A in **Table 1**). Becca aligned with this group. At the beginning and more than halfway through the program she wrote, "I am afraid to grow up and

be on dope;" "I am afraid to grow up around the wrong people;" and "I am afraid to be a failure." In the program observations, journals, and when interviewed, she expressed six times the hope of becoming a psychiatrist. She was also able to bridge kinesiology to psychiatry. As recorded in a program observation during phase two, she said, "I don't think about kinesiology as a career, but exercise is also important so I will learn it, so I can teach it to help people with mental health issues."

Six of the participants were able to talk about their hoped-for-selves right away but did not begin exploring their feared-for-selves until approximately halfway through the program (see Group B in **Table 1**). Jalil aligned with this group. He articulated both verbally and in writing, "I want to play football in college and go to the pros" and, "My fallback plans are auto mechanic or construction." At other times he expressed wanting to "be a coach or Athletic Director." Two times he wrote fearing, "Being homeless and on the streets" and one time, "I don't want to get shot."

Four of the participants were able to talk about their hoped-for-selves right away but never talked about their feared-for-selves (see Group C in **Table 1**). Maggie aligned with this group. In both awareness talks and in her journals, she stated the hope of becoming some kind of a medical doctor. She wrote, "I want to be a doctor that works with kids" and, "I want to be a general surgeon."

The participants who were able to express both their hoped-for-selves and feared-selves right away (Group A) provided a platform for us to immediately work on balancing the two as suggested by the theory of possible selves. While all but one participant expressed more hopes than fears, Group A had an average ratio of approximately 2:1 hopes to fears. The participants who were able to express their hopes right away but took time to express their fears (Group B) seemed to need help from the various components of KCC to get in touch with, and possibly feel comfortable enough to express their fears. All of the participants in Group B expressed many more hopes than fears throughout the program, with an average ratio of approximately 3:1 hopes to fears. Participants who were never able to express fears regardless of the implemented KCC strategies (Group C) had an average ratio of approximately 5:0 hopes to fears. There was a dichotomy with participants in Group C that seemed to fall into two categories. The first category includes Maggie and Julio, soft-spoken, friendly, respectful youth who seemed well adjusted high school students. They both expressed doing well academically. From the beginning of the program Julio wrote journal entries like, "I want to go to college and be a computer engineer" and, "In the future I want to be a doctor or a firefighter." During our encouragement in phase two to explore kinesiology as a future he wrote, "I would be a physical trainer with weight lifting and cardio." When interviewed and directly asked what he was afraid of becoming, he said, "I don't have an answer for that." Maggie has dreamed of and envisioned becoming a doctor since elementary school. When asked about her fears, she said, "I have positive thoughts for the future."

The other Group C category includes Ethan and Raymond, two participants who often did not fully engage in the program. On three separate days when asked to write down what he hoped to become, Ethan wrote, "I don't know." When asked during an

awareness talk he “drew a blank” according to a program observation. Finally, in one of the final sessions of the program he wrote, “I feel set up for college” and, “I know how to get into college and I want to study music and science.” Raymond only seemed to enjoy the program when participating or leading at the martial arts station. He mainly expressed wanting to become a professional athlete and wrote at the beginning of the program, “I want to be either a football player or basketball player” and later wrote, “I hope to become a star like professional in some type of sports.” When directly asked about his fears he said, “I’m not afraid of becoming anything because I got my mind set on positive things.”

All participants who expressed difficult-to-obtain goals, such as becoming professional athletes, were encouraged to have back up plans and were taught about regulations such as the academic eligibility standards needed to play college sports. We expressed the need to still do well academically in high school to get into college, and have a major while playing sports in college. These participants were also asked to explore additional careers of interest. Raymond said when interviewed:

“If I don’t become a professional basketball player or football player, I would like to referee. To get into a good college for academics and sports they look at your transcripts and some colleges like require a 3.5 overall. I am just going to try and bring my GPA up more.”

## 8. DISCUSSION

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Data from field observations, participant journal entries, and semi-structured interviews with the participants support the *a priori* themes and indicate that KCC was successful in achieving its program aims. Not only did participants understand and develop value for the goals of respect, effort, goal-setting, and leadership skills in the context of KCC, but many of them were able to meaningfully connect TPSR goals to their possible futures. Furthermore, program data suggest that when structured into a TPSR-based physical activity program, kinesiology can be an effective springboard for helping high school students envision positive possible futures. KCC participants recognized the importance of respecting teachers and coaches, as well as their current and future employers. Participants articulated the importance of effort for success in academic and life endeavors, and many were able to implement effective goal-setting strategies and provide specific examples of successfully achieved goals, such as Natalie’s much-improved 3.42 GPA. Others indicated a commitment to setting long-term educational goals for themselves.

Findings from both the inductive and deductive data analysis, especially the first two themes and sub-themes, indicate support for transference of KCC goals among the program participants. Many of the participants were able to apply TPSR goals to the study of kinesiology, even if it was not their intended career field. Participants cited effort, respect, goal-setting and leadership as key elements for success in kinesiology, and those who explicitly indicated other careers of choice recognized that the TPSR concepts important for success in kinesiology would also be essential for success in their

envisioned fields. Moreover, KCC participants directly connected TPSR goals to employment settings and career training. Based on the data, respect, effort, and especially leadership resonated with participants in this regard. For example, Marius, Damon, Nora, and Jalil attributed the development of leadership skills to participation in the KCC program, and reflected on the importance of those skills for management opportunities in future careers. These findings are consistent with previously published studies on TPSR and transference, and contribute to the literature on the effectiveness of the inclusion of the theory of possible selves in TPSR programs (Martinek, Schilling, & Johnson, 2001; Walsh, Ozaeta, & Wright 2010).

By establishing a TPSR foundation and then teaching KCC participants about the various sub-disciplines of kinesiology, kinesiology was used as an effective tool for helping the students visualize their own careers of choice. Through KCC, participants learned about the mission and main tenets of the field, the requirements for obtaining bachelor's and master's degrees, and kinesiology-related careers. Furthermore, program participants demonstrated an ability to connect kinesiology to their own careers of choice, notably by linking the standards of college admission and the requirements of a kinesiology major to those of other areas of interest. Data suggest that KCC helped students transfer TPSR concepts and goals to their respective studies and intended careers, and that through engaging with kinesiology, KCC students were better able to envision positive possible futures for themselves (Oyserman & Markus, 1990; Walsh, 2008).

The structure of KCC was also informed by the theory of possible selves. Combining this theory with the main tenets of the TPSR model stands as a unique and effective contribution to the field. Data analysis indicates that participants more easily expressed hoped-for-selves, and that identifying feared-selves was conceptually challenging. Students like Becca, who articulated both what she would like to become (a psychiatrist) and what she is afraid of becoming ("a failure;" "on dope"), demonstrated evidence of a motivational balance between a hoped-for-self and a possible feared self, as discussed by Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee (2002). Some students expressed hopes right away, but had difficulty expressing fears until the second half of the program, while others never articulated any fears. Raymond is a prime example of the latter; he stated a desire to become a star professional athlete, with seemingly little awareness of the significant odds against achieving this goal. His lack of awareness suggests that he was not able to achieve the same balance that Becca did through participation in the program, nor develop the skills to help him regulate the direction of his future behavior (Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002). Despite the range of experiences among participants, KCC was instrumental in helping participants to identify potential hopes and to a lesser extent fears related to their future selves and to envision meaningful, positive possible futures. Furthermore, the findings of the current study indicate that KCC helped mitigate the achievement gap and other social risk factors (Brown & Jones, 2004; Oyserman, Harrison, & Bybee, 2001) for program participants, thus providing evidence that a TPSR program informed by the theory of possible selves can serve as an effective educational program to help youth in underserved communities connect school involvement with adult futures (Yowell, 2002).

Interviews, journal entries, and program observations attest to the effectiveness of incorporating the theory of possible selves into a TPSR-based physical activity program for students in a low-performing inner city high school; however, further research is needed to better understand this complex dynamic. It is our hope that TPSR practitioners will seriously consider implementing similar programs and evaluating their outcomes in order to further contribute to the youth development literature.

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