

Moving From an Implicit to an Explicit Approach of Life Skills Development and Transfer: The Case of Surfing in Schools

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to provide insight on a partnership between Matosinhos City Hall that coordinates educational programs including physical education and the School of Higher Education of Porto. For the past 2 years, the institutions have worked together to develop a local curriculum for physical education teachers to foster life skills development and transfer in their students. In this article, we provide an overview about (a) how the partnership was developed, (b) how establishing fundamental pedagogical components provided the platform for later explicit life skills teaching, (c) the facilitators and barriers that emerged from these efforts, and (d) plans to integrate an explicit approach to sport-based life skills development and transfer.

Keywords

sport, physical education teacher, curriculum, positive youth development

Given youth's developmental needs and the increase of youth programs across the globe (Holt et al., 2017a), researchers and practitioners have highlighted the need for quality youth development programs that use sport to foster life skills development and transfer (Chinkov & Holt, 2016). Gould and Carson (2008) defined life skills as psychosocial attributes and skills such as goal setting and leadership that are taught and applied by youth in sport and/or physical education, and transferred to other life domains (e.g., relationships with peers, family life). More recently, Pierce et al. (2017) discussed how to be considered a life skill, it needs to be applied by participants to other life domains beyond sport, defining life skills transfer as

The ongoing process by which an individual further develops or learns and internalises a personal asset (i.e., psychosocial skill, knowledge, disposition, identity construction, or transformation) in sport and then experiences personal change through the application of the asset in one or more life domains beyond the context where it was originally learned. (p. 194)

Such understanding highlights the role played by coaches and other stakeholders (e.g., parents) in providing solid grounds for life skills development and transfer. In their seminal work, Turnnidge et al. (2014) discussed how life skills could be fostered either explicitly or implicitly. Programs that adopt an implicit approach to life skills development focus on developing sport-specific skills without focus paid

to the development and/or transfer of life skills. Conversely, programs that adopt an explicit approach toward life skills development focus on the concurrent teaching of sport and life skills (Kramers et al., 2020). An implicit approach toward life skills development and transfer has been shown to be less time consuming and more manageable than adopting an explicit approach, where coaches or teachers (hereafter referred to as *teachers*) can set rules, create a physically and psychologically safe environments, foster positive relationships, and model positive behaviors (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Chinkov & Holt, 2016; Jørgensen et al., 2019). In creating such an environment, youth may, through implicit processes, foster one or more life skills. Holt et al. (2017b) provided a grounded theory of positive youth development (PYD) through sport based on results from a qualitative meta-study and highlighted the “. . . combined effects of a PYD climate and a life skills focus will produce more PYD outcomes than

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a PYD climate alone” (p. 38). Recently, Bean et al. (2018) created an implicit/explicit life skills continuum to reflect how coaches may move from an implicit to an explicit approach to life skills development and transfer. Instead of considering life skills development and transfer as dichotomous (i.e., implicit or explicit), Bean et al. highlight the notion of an ongoing dynamic process through six continuum levels. Levels 1 to 3 are focused on an implicit approach toward life skills (e.g., set rules, structure the program), whereas Levels 4 to 6 are focused on an explicit approach toward life skills development and transfer (e.g., discuss and assess life skills transfer with youth). Nevertheless, several intervention programs (e.g., Hellison’s [2011] Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model, Weiss et al.’s [2013] The First Tee) have advocated for explicitly teaching life skills through physical education. For example, Hellison’s (2011) approach on teaching personal and social responsibility has been used to explicitly teach life skills to underserved youth. While reflecting on the implementation of the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model in the Canadian context, Barker and Forneris (2012) alluded to the positive outcomes derived from an explicit approach to life skills, including less school dropout and improved interpersonal relationships in underserved youth. Kendellen et al. (2017) also discussed insights from a successful research-to-practice partnership created between a university and a Canadian national sport organization, highlighting how a life skills-focused curriculum (i.e., explicit approach) fostered an increase in coaches’ ability to foster life skills development and transfer.

To date, no research has utilized this continuum as a guide within the physical education context. Although this continuum was designed initially as a tool for coaches regarding strategies that can be used at each continuum level, it also provides insight on how organizations may develop an explicit approach toward life skills development and transfer. Coakley (2016) highlighted the challenges that may emerge when organizations are unaware of the principles and implications behind integrating a life skill focus into programming. These challenges include the lack of deliberate efforts toward life skills development and transfer. Most studies (e.g., Barker & Forneris, 2012; Weiss et al., 2013) have focused on the outcomes derived from an explicit approach to life skills development and transfer. The dichotomy presented by Turnidge et al. (2014) regarding life skills development conveys the need to consider either an implicit or explicit approach; however, due to the dynamic nature of life skills development and transfer, there is the need to further understand how Bean et al.’s implicit-explicit continuum can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying intricacies linked to fostering life skills development and transfer. For example, it is unknown how national sport organizations may use the levels of implicitness provided by Bean et al. (2018) to fit their context (e.g., policy, philosophical beliefs, current practices, nature of the sport).

Furthermore, more insight is needed to reflect on how the implicit-explicit continuum may be used in different cultures, sports, and organizations. This article reflects the first attempt to create and implement the continuum.

This article provides an overview of (a) how this partnership was developed, (b) how establishing fundamental pedagogical components provided the platform for later explicit life skills teaching, (c) the facilitators and barriers that emerged from the curriculum pilot, and (d) current plans to integrate an explicit approach to life skills development and transfer. This article was not originally designed as an empirical research study and reflects a description of a research-to-practice partnership. However, a utilization-focused approach to evaluation was employed, whereby the evaluation tools created aimed to assess both program processes and outcomes, which help inform program decisions and improvement (Patton, 2011). The implicit/explicit continuum proposed by Bean et al. (2018) is used to understand the facilitators and barriers that emerged from the local curriculum pilot and provides insight on the current stage of the project. Thus, this article could benefit the applied sport psychology literature through providing an overview of an academic-community partnership that works together to design and implement a life skills sport program, as well as the specific content and strategies developed within the curricula. This article is divided into five sections: (a) partnership with Matosinhos City Hall, (b) developing *Surfing in Schools* in primary schools, (c) implementing *Surfing in Schools* in primary schools, (d) outcomes, and (e) lessons learned.

Overview of Matosinhos City Hall and *Surfing in Schools*

Matosinhos City Hall governs education in the city of Matosinhos located in north Portugal and is responsible for delivering physical education-based programs to youth between 6 and 10 years old, and developing related projects aimed to foster quality developmental experiences for these youth. Matosinhos City Hall aims to develop personal and social skills in youth to help them become equipped for life and contribute to improve the communities they live in (Matosinhos City Hall, 2018). Matosinhos City Hall manages 33 primary schools and delivers multiple programs to more than 7,000 youth. Matosinhos City Hall works directly with schools and teachers by making local adaptations to the national physical education curriculum and creating novel projects that may generate better developmental outcomes in youth participants. Although the organization’s mission aligns with life skills development, prior to this partnership, life skills were not directly integrated into most of their programming.

In 2012, *Surfing in Schools* was introduced by Matosinhos City Hall. The sport of surfing was chosen by this organization based on its popularity in the region, the ease of access to beaches, and youth’s intrinsic motivation to engage in this

sport. Specifically, surf has been considered a valuable platform for holistic psychosocial development due to the fact it consists of “a physically challenging outdoor activity experienced with other people in a friendly, supported and fun way” (Godfrey et al, 2015, p. 29). Researchers (e.g., Hignett et al., 2018; Lopes, 2015) have considered surf to have important features that may enable life skills development and transfer such as the need to (a) interact with others and work together for safety and performance purposes (i.e., enables the development of teamwork and empathy) and (b) overcome fears and master skills needed to navigate in the water (i.e., enables the development of focus, goal setting, and perseverance). Considering the potential for surf to be a platform to foster life skills development and transfer, several programs have been conducted in Portugal and other countries, serving several populations, including underserved youth (Armitano et al., 2015; Lopes, 2015). *Surfing in Schools* was offered free of charge to youth participants and was developed to (a) minimize student dropout and alcohol and tobacco consumption, (b) provide an environment youth could use as an outlet for avoiding risk behaviors (e.g., alcohol consumption), and (c) foster inclusion. At time of program initiation, for 5 years, the program was run in this way with the aim of achieving the three aforementioned goals. The team responsible for program delivery, that involved surfing coaches and physical education teachers, did not have the capacity to intentionally foster life skills with youth, and predominantly focused on providing an organized and safe environment for youth to engage in surf.

Partnership With Matosinhos City Hall

In 2017, Matosinhos City Hall¹ identified the value of developing a research-to-practice partnership to help local schools and teachers increase quality delivery and revisit program goals. Considering the solicitations of Matosinhos City Hall to create an overarching surf-based curriculum, researchers (third, fourth, and fifth authors) at School of Higher Education of Porto were invited by the Matosinhos City Hall to help adapt the *Surfing in Schools* in primary schools. The following sections outline how the partnership worked with Matosinhos City Hall to help adapt the *Surfing in Schools* to integrate a life skill focus. These adaptations included establishing fundamental pedagogical components, creating a curricula and educating teachers on how to teach surf to youth in primary schools (i.e., youth from 9–11 years of age), and integrating evidenced-based best practices related to life skills development and surf. Stakeholders working in Matosinhos City Hall contacted university teachers from the first author’s institution, who were also trained surf coaches and requested their support to design a surfing curriculum for youth in Matosinhos. After multiple in-person meetings, a formal partnership was established.

In these meetings, both parties established program goals, clarified the roles of each partner and set an implementation

plan. Specifically, Matosinhos City Hall took care of the logistical steps needed to implement the program (e.g., contact schools, set schedules, attain permission from parents), and the first author’s institution was responsible for program creation, delivery, and evaluation. In-person meetings and phone conversations served the purpose of discussing potential ideas for program creation, delivery, and evaluation.

Implementing Surfing in Schools in Primary Schools

Wave 1: Establishing Fundamental Pedagogical Components for Adopting an Implicit Approach to Life Skills Development

The first wave of *Surfing in Schools* was conducted between 2017 and 2018. The first step in developing the *Surfing in Schools* project was to understand stakeholders’ expectations of the program and explore their initial understanding and perspectives toward youth development and surf. This was a crucial step in mapping cultural features that could enable or constrain program implementation and engage programmers. For example, the research team worked to understand the institutional goals behind delivering the program and teachers’ motivations to set realistic goals for program delivery. From conversations with stakeholders, teachers were interested and motivated to learn key pedagogical components needed to teach surf.

From the outset, Matosinhos City Hall prioritized creating a physically and psychologically safe environment that was structured for youth to learn surf, which is foundational for creating a PYD climate (see Bean et al., 2018). To deliver a quality program, safety and a positive climate were prioritized. Together, the stakeholders worked with the research team, and felt it was necessary to establish fundamental pedagogical components that align with an implicit approach to life skills development (safe and supportive environment) that would build a foundation for future programming, where the integration of an explicit approach to life skills development would be prioritized (see Figure 1 for an overview of the first wave) was a good place to start, as making too many changes could lead to unsustainable change and increased barriers. From multiple conversations with stakeholders, this approach was favored because (a) learning to teach surf was perceived as a time-consuming and demanding task on its own, (b) developing life skills was seen as a complex endeavor, and (c) teaching surf and fostering a safe climate were crucial for youth participants’ safety and adherence to the program.

Educating teachers. Consequently, the primary objective of the research team was to educate all stakeholders about both surf and key pedagogical fundamentals. For example, a teacher needs to be fully equipped to understand and apply basic safety rules on the beach and structure a positive environment to

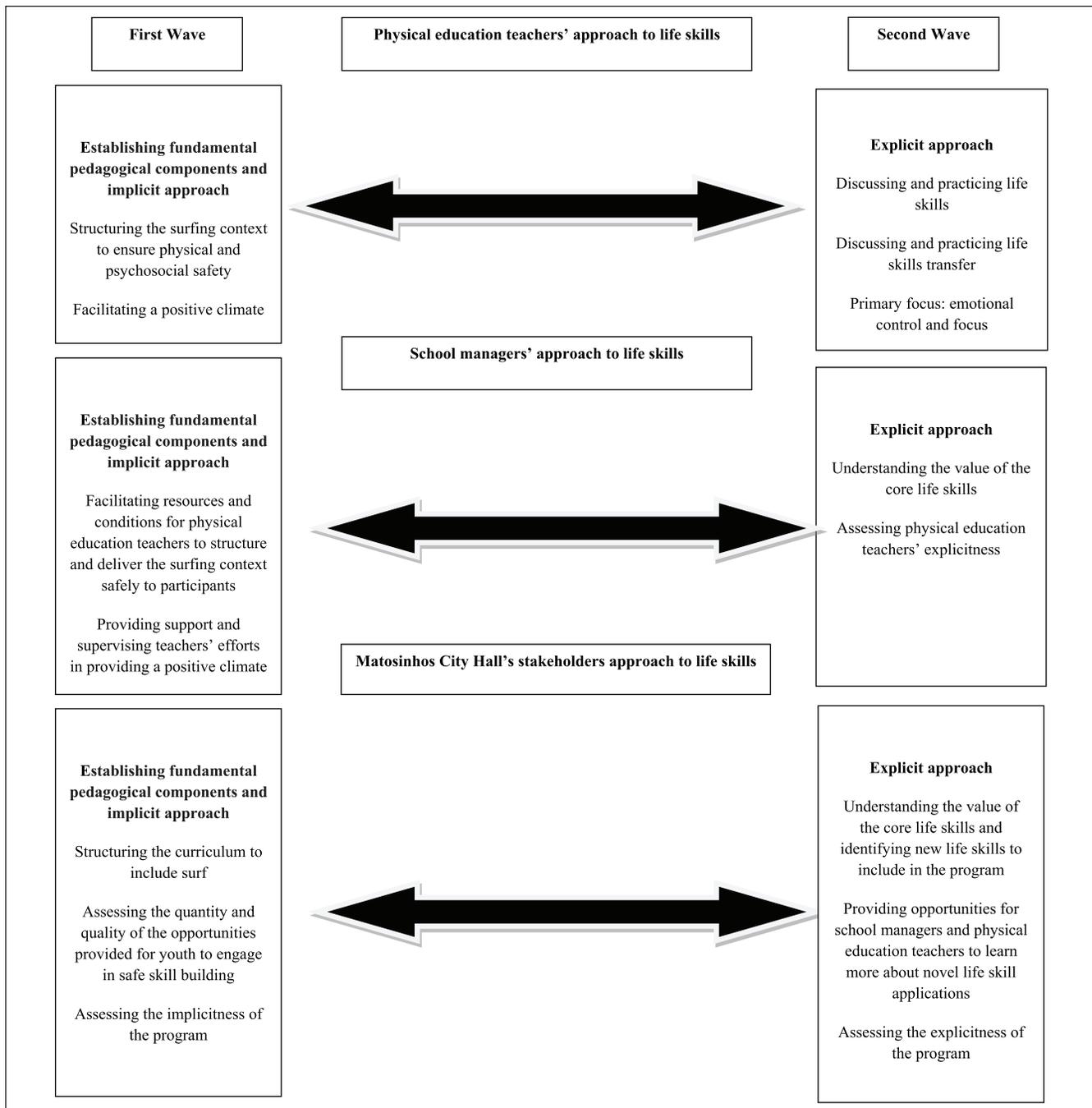


Figure 1. Conceptualization of each stage of the program based on Bean's et al. (2018) implicit/explicit continuum.

enable youth to overcome any fears associated with surfing. Concurrently, safety and establishing supportive relationships with youth were considered fundamental in building trust and creating a positive climate. Based on these efforts, a consensus was reached, whereby the primary objective would be to develop a surf-based program that could implicitly foster positive outcomes, such as life skills development and transfer instead of moving immediately to an explicit approach (see Figure 1 for an overview of the implicit curriculum). Hence,

the research team (i.e., third, fourth, and sixth authors) alongside programmers and teachers developed a plan to educate teachers on how to implement fundamental pedagogical components in their practice, and develop an implicit approach. This plan involved the creation of a teacher education program that included (a) workshops to equip teachers on how to teach surf fundamentals (October to December 2017; e.g., safety rules, procedures to enter the water), (b) theoretical lessons led by the research team to help youth participants understand

Table 1. Sample Lesson Plans Across the Continuum.

Continuum	Sample lesson plan
Levels 1 and 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students are received by a member of the project and put on their surfing gear. 2. Then, students head to the beach where the surf teachers set motor goals, allude to the safety rules, and focus on the importance of fun and enjoyment throughout the session. 3. Students warm up individually and do a set of five sprints each. 4. Then, students in groups of two are instructed to (a) grab the board, (b) push her/his body forward, (c) slide in the water. 5. Surf teachers focus on providing positive feedback and enhancing students' accomplishments throughout the session. 6. At the end, students are invited to share their thoughts about the session and surf teachers provide constructive feedback.
Levels 3 and 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students are received by a member of the project and put on their surfing gear. 2. Then, students head to the beach where the surf teachers set motor goals and mention that emotional control and perseverance will be developed. These life skills are defined to the students and their importance is explicitly discussed. 3. Students warm up individually and decide how many sprints they are able to do. The teacher stresses the importance of trying their best. 4. Then, students in groups of two are instructed to (a) grab the board, (b) push her/his body forward, (c) slide in the water. Points are awarded once students are able to try their best and improve their performance in between series. Surf teachers focused on helping students control their emotions in the water and award points for this behavior. This reward system is used to value life skill application. 5. Surf teachers focus on providing positive feedback and enhancing students' accomplishments throughout the session based on the motor and life skills developed. 6. At the end, students are invited to share their thoughts about the session, life skills applied in surf, and surf teachers provide constructive feedback.
Levels 5 and 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students are received by a member of the project and put on their surfing gear. 2. Then, students head to the beach where the surf teachers set motor goals and mention that leadership will be also developed. This life skill is defined to the students and life skills transfer opportunities are explicitly discussed. 3. Students warm up in pairs. Students coach another one and select a warm-up activity for both. The teacher highlights how this life skill is crucial in both surf and other life domains such as school. 4. Then, students are invited to teach a group of parents basic surfing skills. 5. Surf teachers focus on providing positive feedback and enhancing students' accomplishments throughout the session. 6. At the end, students are invited to share their thoughts about the session, what it means to be leader in and outside sport, and surf teachers provide constructive feedback.

safety rules and surf fundamentals (January 2018 to February 2018), and (c) practical lessons on the beach on safety rules and surf fundamentals lead by the research team and teachers (March 2018 to June 2018). To ensure program fidelity, trained researchers and/or certified surf coaches shadowed teachers during program delivery (i.e., throughout the whole process) to ensure teachers were following the core principles behind the program. These strategies aligned with a PYD approach and provided a foundation for future integration of explicit approaches to life skills development (see Chinkov & Holt, 2016; Jørgensen et al., 2019) due to the focus on structuring a safe, fun, and enjoyable environment where risks were controlled (Level 1 in the implicit–explicit continuum). A total of 126 lessons were delivered and supervised by trained researchers and/or certified surf coaches. For example, surf lessons would start with a welcome by the trained researchers and/or certified surf coaches and teachers, explanation or revision of the safety rules, and basic activities in small groups and individually to work on surf fundamentals (connect with the surf board, adopt the correct stance, and surf the wave). Attention was paid to providing constant supervision, positive feedback, and encouragement to youth participants. A final reflection was conducted to assess participants' perceptions about the session and obtain feedback from teachers.

This plan was created through collaborative and ongoing discussions with programmers and teachers in an attempt to facilitate program delivery by avoiding barriers (e.g., safety issues in the water, helping youth learn surf fundamentals). Thus, the plan focused on (a) basic teaching skills needed for the development of a surf curriculum, (b) features needed for a physically and psychologically safe environment, and (c) positive teacher–student relationships (see Table 1 for sample lesson plan). These concerns aligned with the developmental level of the participants (i.e., 9–11 years old), specifically their social and emotional learning needs (e.g., initiative, decision making, respect for the rights and feelings of others) and motor skills included in the physical education curriculum.

Program delivery. The program was well received by Matosinhos City Hall, schools, and teachers because of the perceived relevance and feasibility of the program, which helped foster sustainability. Feedback was gathered through formal and informal (i.e., meetings and communication via email) conversations with stakeholders. Based on their perspectives and ongoing discussions with stakeholders, a decision was made to integrate an explicit life skill focus in the program. Programmers recognized that, in Phase 1, it was necessary to

Table 2. Life Skills Operational Definitions.

Life skill	Definition for teachers	Connection with surf	Guidelines for transfer
Perseverance	Maintain effort when scared of the water and trying hard to learn basic physical, technical, and tactical skills	Surf is a sport where technical skills are crucial and require time and perseverance to be learned. Generally, success does not come without hard work and effort due to the complex nature of the sport.	Discuss how perseverance could be utilized in other sports where youth may struggle to learn a skill, school subjects that are challenging, and at-home tasks
Teamwork	Working cooperatively to complete all tasks in the water	Surf is also dependent on teamwork. Although this is an individual sport, participants are always dependent on others to (a) have opportunities to surf at sea; (b) in most cases, train and learn skills; (c) avoid unpredictable risks.	Discuss how teamwork could be utilized in other sports, school subjects that require tasks in groups and tasks with peers and family toward a common goal.
Emotional control	Control emotions, specifically fear of the water and frustration for not succeeding	Due to unpredictable risks and nature of the sport and interaction with the sea, controlling your emotions is paramount to learn technical and tactical skills and face these challenges.	Discuss how emotional control could be utilized in other sports where youth may feel frustrated or provoked by others, and in relationships with peers in other subjects and at home.
Focus	Direct your attention toward the sea and the unpredictable nature of this environment	Surf requires a tremendous focus to refine skills and be successful while maneuvering the surf board at sea.	Discuss how focus could be utilized to execute a skill in other sports, other subjects, and daily tasks.
Leadership	Athletes help each other to learn skills	The sport also provides important opportunities to work on leadership. Helping others is crucial for all participants to have a chance to surf, develop skills, and awareness about their performance and/or risks.	Discuss leadership that could be utilized in other sports where others may need help to improve technical skills, in other subjects, and at home where someone might struggle in completing a task.
Decision making	Conduct tasks autonomously and manage roles and responsibilities in the water, alone or in collaboration with others.	Decision making is crucial in surf. All decisions have immediate consequences on performance levels, one's safety, and on other surfers' performance and safety.	Discuss how decision making is crucial in other sports, school subjects, and at home, and highlight the need to learn from positive and negative consequences.

meet the teachers where they were at, based on their knowledge, capacity, and resources, and adapt the program structure to include feasible objectives to foster their buy-in, while still working to offer a program that can have positive effects on youth. While stakeholders and the research team were deciding future plans, the first author joined the program and prompted reflections on how to integrate an explicit approach toward life skills within *Surfing in Schools* and helped frame the program within the continuum proposed by Bean et al. (2018). The implicit–explicit continuum was used to (a) situate the work conducted in the first wave and (b) help structure the priorities set for the second wave and guide research–stakeholders discussions. Thus, stakeholders mentioned an explicit approach to life skills development and transfer would be a feasible and valuable objective at this stage, but would require a holistic and teacher-centered approach to become sustainable over time and overcome potential barriers. A concern shared by the stakeholders was to assure the different layers of Matosinhos City Hall (directors, school board members, teachers) acknowledged the logic behind the implicit/explicit continuum being developed. Furthermore, some teachers felt they had little control over contents,

activities, and strategies, and needed to be empowered. Hence, we developed a second phase of program planning that enabled us to tailor the program based on stakeholder insights (i.e., facilitators, barriers, recommendations).

Wave 2: Moving Toward an Explicit Approach to Life Skills Development

In 2019, the research team developed a plan to foster an explicit approach toward life skills development and transfer. Based on several researcher–stakeholder discussions, a set of life skills, and associated definitions, deemed relevant to *Surfing in Schools*, were created: (a) emotional control, (b) focus, (c) perseverance, (d) teamwork, (e) decision making, and (f) leadership (see Table 2 for an operational definition of each life skill). The life skills literature has suggested that the most effective programs have skills that connect directly to the sport (e.g., the nine core values in *The First Tee*; Weiss et al., 2013). In this case, there were well-established communication channels that facilitated ongoing discussions (i.e., meetings and communications via email). Nevertheless, we suggest that researchers collect feedback

to transition programs from implicit to explicit approaches through systematic tools such as focus group interviews and/or questionnaires to make sure their approach is aligned with organizations' actual needs and goals. A life skills progression was also created, where certain life skills were identified as foundational build blocks for other life skills. For example, emotional control and focus are first taught to help youth understand how these life skills are key for entering the water and surfing, and also in other life domains. Life skills have also been considered sport specific and should be analyzed within a particular context/sport (Weiss et al., 2013). Then, opportunities to develop the remaining life skills will be promoted by teachers, in subsequent lessons. This adaptation resulted from discussions with surf experts and Matosinhos City Hall (see Table 2 for sample lesson plan). Nevertheless, there is flexibility in the curriculum, whereby teachers may choose which life skills they wish to focus on within the program. Although there is an established progression for life skills development and transfer, teachers based on their context (i.e., school, students) may decide to teach a specific life skill and adapt the curriculum. This decision was made to help teachers consider youth's developmental needs and to empower them for their own teaching. Based on similar projects conducted in Canada (e.g., Kendellen et al., 2017), this format enables teachers to plan for life skills development and transfer and, simultaneously, empowers them in their role as crucial actors within the program. Supporting teachers' autonomy through a coconstructed curriculum was a high priority in curriculum development so they are able to tailor and adapt program guidelines to youth's developmental needs. This helps address the identified barrier from the first stage of the project, where some teachers felt they had little control over program content, strategies, and activities, which may have led to their lack of motivation for program delivery. However, the coconstructed curriculum still needs to have concrete guidelines (e.g., perseverance could be developed while students are learning basic swimming skills as goals could be set based on their skill level) to ensure program fidelity and quality are upheld.

Educating all stakeholders. Considering the premises behind integrating an explicit approach toward life skills development and transfer, an overarching module, informed by Bean et al.'s (2018) continuum, has been created to educate all stakeholders (see Figure 1 for stakeholder guidelines to teach life skills in the program). A top-down approach was designed to facilitate the integration of a life skill focus. For example, a school manager needs to understand what life skills are, the life skills developed in the program, and understand how to provide support for schools' and teachers' to implement the curriculum. Through discussions with stakeholders, this was deemed crucial to facilitate life skills transfer (i.e., from surf to other content areas) and engage other key social agents with the program curricula. Concurrently, due to the fact that teachers may move to a different school after 1 year, it was

also considered crucial to create a culture in each school that valued life skills development and transfer. This strategy could facilitate the engagement of teachers new to the program, which was perceived as a barrier. To start creating this culture, schools were involved within the program instead of only focusing on teachers. This systemic approach facilitates buy-in from schools and makes it easier to move toward a culture that values life skills development and transfer.

Short-duration modules were created for the board of the Matosinhos City Hall and school managers (see Figure 1 for a conceptualization of this stage of the program) and will be conducted online (i.e., in an *asynchronous online format*) and serve the purpose of educating stakeholders in the program curricula (life skills fostered through the program and operational definitions). This phase of the program will include ongoing training for teachers about how to foster life skills (126 supervised surf classes led by teachers and members of the research team) and a 5-hr workshop on life skills led by the first author to present the program. For example, an overview about PYD and life skills (1 hr) alongside a conceptualization of the implicit–explicit continuum will be provided (1 hr), as well as a presentation and discussion of the curriculum (3 hr).

Outcomes. Based on the efforts made in the first phase of the program and changes made within the second phase, it was possible to generate positive outcomes reflected on the fact that Matosinhos City Hall was willing and acknowledged the need to coconstruct a life skills curriculum and a systematic evaluation protocol. These were important outcomes that derived from this research-to-practice project. Thus, as a result of all the efforts made, teachers will be provided with a manual that includes the life skills developed in the program, operational definitions (see Table 1 for life skills and operational definitions), and sample activities on how to explicitly incorporate each life skill into a lesson. For example, if the lesson's life skill was *perseverance*, sample questions would be provided to help facilitate youth discussion on what this life skill means to them within and beyond sport and an activity would be provided, such as working in pairs to enter the water and attempt to catch a wave. Moreover, example of teachable moments of where it would be valuable for a teacher to react to positive (e.g., witness youth putting forth effort despite challenges her/she is experiencing) or negative (e.g., notice a youth is showing signs of frustration in the water) behaviors would also be provided, which can be used as a learning moment (e.g., discussing how certain technical skills may help overcome obstacles in the water and the value of never giving up in surfing or in life).

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation were critical in providing a comprehensive understanding of program fidelity and impact on teachers and key stakeholders. Based on discussions with stakeholders, it was considered important to create an assessment protocol that actively engaged all stakeholders (i.e., teachers, youth, school managers, programmers),

but was not perceived as burdensome and a barrier to program delivery. Gaining multiple perspectives will enable a comprehensive understanding of program delivery (i.e., challenges and barriers) and impact (i.e., outcomes). Specifically, an online platform will be used by stakeholders on a regular basis to (a) assess Matosinhos City Hall and school managers' support for teachers to foster life skills, (b) assess teachers' efforts to foster an explicit approach to life skills development and transfer, and (c) explore stakeholders' perspectives of program delivery and effectiveness. A mixed-methods online questionnaire will be used to assess stakeholders' perceptions of program delivery that includes quantitative Likert-type scale questions based on the implicit/explicit continuum and open-ended questions (e.g., "How did the sample activities help you implement the program?" "How have you tried to support teachers in implementing *Surfing in Schools*?"). This stage is currently underway and constitutes the first attempt to increase the level of explicitness within Matosinhos City Hall. To date, this will also be the first attempt to develop a life skills-focused program based on the continuum that includes all stakeholders. This approach aimed to (a) educate all stakeholders about life skills development and transfer and (b) clarify roles and responsibilities that may facilitate teacher's intervention efforts toward both implicit and explicit strategies for life skills teaching. Such an approach is aligned with previous work that recognizes the role played by various stakeholders, including coaches, teachers, administrators, and policy makers to foster sustainable life skills development and transfer (Camiré & Santos, 2019).

Lessons Learned

Facilitators

Throughout this 2-year process of developing curriculum and delivering *Surfing in Schools*, we (a) gained valuable insight on how to implement a life skill focus within surf-based programs and (b) connected research to practice by shedding light on how to utilize the implicit/explicit continuum (Bean et al., 2018).

Schools' and teachers' needs, motivations, and emergent challenges were crucial in making the initial decision of using an implicit approach. Ongoing discussions and reflection over the course of 2 years were deemed crucial to program implementation and facilitated the efforts made by researchers to ultimately infuse an explicit life skills focus. The integration of stakeholder feedback was also used to empower and facilitate curriculum ownership by all organizational layers. It was important to meet partner's immediate needs and objectives, and engage in incremental changes that ultimately led to the creation of an explicit life skill curricula. Previous life skill programs have mainly focused on either an implicit or explicit approach to life skills, which does not consider the dynamic nature of this process. The

development and implementation of a life skill curriculum also depends on ". . . philosophical orientations . . . motivations and resources. One's philosophy plays a key role in influencing how behaviors are generated and how these behaviors reactively or proactively facilitate youth's life skills development and transfer" (Bean et al., 2018, p. 4). Furthermore, considering the Portuguese culture, the particularities of surf as a sport and Matosinhos City Hall's philosophies and guiding principles of the implicit-explicit continuum provided insight on how starting with an implicit approach was crucial to integrate a life skills curriculum. This was an important outcome of this project.

Awareness about the need for a life skill focus, time, and positive influence from program participation were needed to foster buy-in for the development of an explicit curriculum that included all stakeholders. It was necessary to make Matosinhos City Hall aware of the potential value of an explicit approach based on best practices in the literature. We should consider that these decisions were made within a specific sport context (i.e., surf) and culture in which life skills curricula is still novel. In other circumstances and/or projects, sport psychology professionals may guide organizations directly toward an explicit approach or use an implicit approach. This decision and transition should be made based on what is needed to create the most sustainable format possible in a specific context. This is the first attempt to use the implicit/explicit model (Bean et al., 2018) to understand and guide a research-to-practice partnership, and associated curricula that can help other researchers working in similar programs. Future studies and intervention programs could further contextualize life skills programming to specific surf programs, given previous research in this area (e.g., Britton, 2015, 2018). Although this was a surfing-specific program, sport organizations, associations, and education services need to reflect on how to infuse an explicit focus on life skills development and transfer into their programming and/or broader organization to focus on quality programs that foster holistic youth development. Specifically, engaging other stakeholders (e.g., school managers) beyond teachers and creating strong pedagogical foundations for their practice could be crucial to later develop an explicit life skills curricula. For example, researchers may work with teachers, school managers, and directors to understand their evaluation capacity, highlight the role played by evaluation, and define a plan to assess program delivery and outcomes (Shaikh et al., 2020). This provides encouraging insight on how to actually foster organizational change and include a life skill focus.

Barriers

Although this project generated positive outcomes in Matosinhos City Hall, there are several barriers that should be considered. Researchers should tread carefully while attempting to integrate life skills development and transfer in

organizations and define realistic goals on the degree of change expected. While working with community organizations, it is crucial to avoid substantial changes in short periods of time. Thus, the step-by-step approach that drove program creation and implementation helped the research team to identify facilitators and barriers that emerged from the curriculum pilot and attain insight on how to increase chances of program sustainability.

Conducting programs with a life skill focus within “real-world scenarios” is a complex endeavor. Although many programs (e.g., Kendellen et al., 2017; Weiss et al., 2013) have used an explicit approach toward life skills development and transfer (e.g., The First Tee), several challenges warrant consideration. First, the decision to initially use an implicit approach was made due to the lack of resources (e.g., knowledge on PYD and surf) and specific needs inherent to surfing (the importance of a PYD climate in this sport). Second, an explicit approach toward life skills development and transfer is still novel in Portugal and research-to-practice partnerships such as the one described in this article are scarce, which highlights the need to portray organizational change within a continuum. Considering the novelty of life skills-focused programs in the Portuguese context that uses surfing as a platform, organizational change may be necessary to educate stakeholders about how to foster life skills in youth and prompt reflection about the effectiveness of current projects that believe they are teaching values. Carefully designed evaluation protocols are needed to help understand program delivery and associated outcomes (Shaikh et al., 2020). Reflections as the project unfolds could provide insight on how to create a sustainable program with an explicit focus. Although *Surfing in Schools* is now one of the most popular surf programs in north Portugal, serving around 280 youth each year, sustainability may only be assessed throughout the next years of the project.

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