

## The Five Cs of Positive Youth Development in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

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### **Abstract**

*This study took a qualitative look at an Aotearoa/New Zealand-based positive youth development outdoor-education program in schools using the 5 Cs model of positive youth development. The*

### PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

*viewpoints of young people, parents, and teachers were gathered, providing an opportunity to explore additional perspectives of the 5 Cs. All 5 Cs were seen to be present in the program and the 6<sup>th</sup> C of contribution was also observed. The Cs of competence, confidence and connection featured strongly, whilst the C of connection appeared to be important to young people's experience of the program. Young people and adults prioritized different outcomes, with adults focusing more on future impacts and young people identifying more immediate benefits. The findings of this study add to an understanding of the 5 Cs model beyond the American context and highlight areas for future research.*

Key words: positive youth development, Five Cs model, youth program

## Introduction

Supporting youth and preparing them for adulthood is a key focus for governments, policies and programs (Lerner et al., 2018). Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an approach to supporting youth, which believes that all young people can develop positively and provides avenues for this to occur (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma 2007). Youth programs are seen as a key vehicle to facilitate PYD (Lerner, Lerner, et. al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016). Programs taking this approach broadly include skill building opportunities, positive relationships and opportunities for leadership and empowerment (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016).

The Five Cs of Positive Youth Development, comprising competence, confidence, connection, caring and character, leading to a sixth C of contribution, is a well-known and well-researched PYD model (Heck & Subramaniam, 2009) and much of this work has been undertaken in the United States with quantitative methodologies. The Five Cs are viewed as indicators of thriving (King et al., 2005) and the desired goals and outcomes of PYD programs (Lerner, Fisher & Weinberg, 2000; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003), thus, they can be seen as a theory of development and an approach to programs.

This article describes a small qualitative study in Aotearoa/New Zealand of the PYD outcomes of a year-long, school-based outdoor-education program for 11- to 13-year-olds, using the Five Cs as outcomes. The program includes five outdoor challenge activities; 20 hours of community service; and 20 hours of passion project(s), where participants develop a new hobby or interest. The study looks at whether the Five Cs are perceived to be present in the program, from the perspectives of young people, teachers and parents, and how the program is seen to contribute to the development of these outcomes. In this study, the Five Cs are used as an approach to understand the program and participant perceptions of its outcomes, rather than as a theoretical model of youth development. As such, this article provides two opportunities of interest to researchers in PYD: to explore additional perspectives of the Five Cs through a

PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

qualitative approach that includes the views of youth and adults in a PYD program, and to further understand the relevance of the Five Cs model in programs beyond the American context.

***Positive Youth Development and the Five Cs***

Positive youth development emerged in the 1990s through recognition that, despite a view of adolescence as a time of struggle and turbulence, many adolescents not only survived but thrived (Lerner, 2005; Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005). Positive youth development recognizes and focuses on the strengths, resources and potential of young people, and works to build young people's skills and engage them in communities (Lerner, 2004). As a broad paradigm, PYD can be seen as a developmental process in which all young people can develop positively through interaction with their key environments, as a philosophy or approach to programs that enhance development, and as instances of programs taking this approach (Hamilton, as cited in Lerner et. al, 2011).

Of all PYD models, the Five Cs model is the most well-researched (Heck & Subramaniam, 2009), and broadly describes what thriving looks like in young people. Each C represents a range of attributes that are seen to be present if young people are developing positively (Lerner, Fisher & Weinberg, 2000; Lerner, Lerner et al., 2005). Competence refers to a sense of capability in specific areas such as social, academic, cognitive and vocational; confidence to a global sense of self-efficacy and self-worth; connection to positive and reciprocal relationships with peers, family, school and community; character to morality, integrity and adherence to societal and cultural norms; and caring to sympathy and empathy towards others (Lerner, Lerner et al., 2005). It is suggested that these outcomes lead to youth contributing to civil society, enhancing both the community and their own ongoing development. This is referred to as the sixth C of contribution (Lerner, Lerner et al., 2005).

A longitudinal study of the Five Cs was undertaken in the United States from 2003 to 2010, with eight waves of data and over 7000 young people (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). It compared the development of young people involved in 4-H programs, which are a range of after-school and camp programs, with those involved in other youth programs (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). This study developed measures for the Five Cs, and demonstrated that they can be used to define and measure PYD (Bowers et al., 2010; Geldhof et al., 2014; Lerner, Lerner et al., 2005; Phelps et al. 2009).

### PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

Other researchers have begun to look at the Five Cs, among them Holsen, Geldhof, Larsen, and Aardal (2016), who adapted a Five C measure for Norway and compared the results of a sample of nearly 1200 Norwegian adolescents in a school-based program promoting mental health and empowerment to those of a sample from the 4-H study. Invariance tests between overlapping measurement items across the two samples showed that both PYD and the Cs appeared to be experienced similarly in both settings. Conway, Heary and Hogan (2015) tested a Five Cs measure on a sample of 672 Irish adolescents in post-primary schools to determine the validity and reliability of the measure. They found that the Five Cs measure fitted the Irish sample when covariance between caring and character and between connection and social competence were included.

In the United States, a qualitative study investigating young minority males' experiences of an after-school sports program found that participants experienced growth in all of the Five Cs, with indicators pointing towards future contribution to society (Fuller, Percy, Bruening, & Cotrufo, 2013). Earlier, King et al. (2005) looked at the language used by young people and parents to describe thriving, and found that while there was limited consistency in terms used, participants' descriptions aligned with the Five Cs. The quantitative and qualitative studies described above suggest that the Five Cs model may be applicable in a range of contexts, while Lerner and colleagues (2018) suggest continued exploration of its global relevance and of its expression in a range of different contexts and programs.

### ***Aotearoa/New Zealand PYD***

Aotearoa/New Zealand is a bicultural nation, founded in 1840 on The Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which grants special rights and protections to Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand (Orange, 2013). These rights have not always been upheld and the processes of colonization have had numerous negative impacts on the health, well-being and development of Māori (Came, 2014). Alongside its biculturalism, Aotearoa/New Zealand is the fifth most ethnically diverse nation in the OECD (Office of Ethnic Communities, 2016).

In Aotearoa/New Zealand, PYD informs the Ministry of Youth Development by underpinning strategic approaches to working with young people (Ministry of Youth Development, 2009). The Ministry of Youth Development works with government, business, and youth organizations to deliver well-being outcomes for youth; it funds some youth development programs and supports youth involvement in decision making (Ministry of Youth Development, n.d.). Whilst there is valid critique of utilizing Western-based models in a bicultural nation with an ethnically

### PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

diverse population (Beals, 2015; Cosgriff et al., 2012; Keelan, 2014), a PYD approach and the Five Cs model are seen by some to dovetail with Māori approaches in their holistic and strengths-based philosophies (Arahanga-Doyle et al., 2018; Harré, 2014). However, Arahanga-Doyle et al. (2018) suggest that the Five Cs model sees the individualized construct of confidence as key to identity, whilst indigenous approaches may see connection as key.

Despite the critique of adopting Western-based views of PYD, local conceptualizations of PYD programs draw on international literature and can encompass a broad range of activities including but not limited to mentoring, service and volunteering, adventure programs, arts and culture and cadet style programs (Ministry of Youth Development, 2009). Programs can also occur in community, school or institutional settings. There is growing evidence of the effectiveness of PYD programs in Aotearoa/New Zealand (See Arahanga-Doyle et al., 2018; Bullen, Noonan & Farruggia, 2012; Deane & Harré, 2014; Deane, Harré, Moore, & Courtney, 2017; Farruggia et al, 2011; Grocott & Hunter, 2009; Hayhurst, Hunter, Kafka, & Boyes, 2015; Hunter et al., 2013).

Of most relevance to this study is research into outdoor-education-based programs. Within this subset, two types of programs have been well researched in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The first is the school-based Project K program, which includes a wilderness experience, community contribution and mentoring for high-school students showing low self-efficacy. The second is sailing voyage programs, where young people spend 7 to 10 days onboard a sailing ship learning to sail, live and work together.

Project K has been evaluated qualitatively and quantitatively through a number of studies, and the following outcomes have been identified: self-efficacy, resilience and well-being (Furness, Williams, Veale, & Gardner, 2017); "positive self-concept; knowledge and skill acquisition; connection with others; stronger motivation and flow-on achievement; a positive outlook; the recognition and use of new resources and opportunities; maturity; independence; and greater mental and physical health and fitness"(Deane & Harré, 2014, p. 65). Social and academic self-efficacy have also been shown to be greater for participants than for a control group, both post program and after one year (Deane, et al., 2017). A further study, testing elements of the program's theory of change, showed engagement in the wilderness adventure and mentoring support impacted social self-efficacy and sense of community respectively (Chapman, Deane, Harré, Courtney, & Moore, 2017).

### PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

Reported outcomes from sailing-voyage programs in Aotearoa/New Zealand include global and domain-specific self-esteem (Grocott & Hunter, 2009), self-esteem 12 months after the voyage (Hunter et al., 2013), and resilience or productive responses to challenges both immediately after the voyage and three months after the voyage (Hayhurst et al., 2015). Further, self-esteem was seen to be influenced by self-efficacy and belonging, (Hunter et al, 2013), while resilience was influenced by social-effectiveness and self-efficacy (Hayhurst et al, 2015). Belonging to a group on the voyage was also seen to be a predictor of self-esteem (Scarf et al., 2018). A further study looking at outcomes for Māori and New Zealand European youth on a 7-day voyage showed outcomes of self-esteem, resilience and positive outlook at the end of the voyage, and that the latter two were positively impacted by a sense of social/collective identity (Arahanga-Doyle et al., 2018).

To the authors' knowledge, no studies have used the Five Cs as an evaluation tool in Aotearoa/New Zealand, either qualitatively or quantitatively. However, as noted above, Arahanga-Doyle et al. (2018) cite links between the Five Cs and indigenous approaches with caution, while Deane, Harré, Moore and Courtney (2016) relate self-efficacy to the Cs of confidence and competence. In these studies, elements related to the C of connection, such as relationships with mentors, belonging and a sense of collective identity were identified as processes which contributed to other outcomes, rather than outcomes themselves. The acknowledgement of the Five Cs as a key model of youth development and links to the Five Cs in existing studies suggest value in using this model in the current study.

## Methods

The program in this study is a year-long outdoor-education program for 11- to 13-year-olds, run by schools in partnership with the program organisation. The program includes: five outdoor challenge activities; 20 hours of community service; and 20 hours of passion project(s), where participants develop a new hobby or interest. A teacher or school coordinator supports participation and young people reflect on and record their progress. Activities are not prescribed, allowing the program to fit the local context. At the time of this study, approximately 50 schools across Aotearoa/New Zealand were involved in the program.

The study sought to understand if and how the program was perceived to support PYD outcomes, specifically the presence of the Five Cs for young people. However, because the Five Cs are not widely used in Aotearoa/New Zealand, understanding how participants experienced outcomes within the program and how these aligned with PYD was important. Due to the

### PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

interest in experiences, an interpretivist stance was used, which focused on how people make sense of phenomena within their social contexts (Willis, 2007). To understand participants' views of the program and its outcomes, a qualitative approach was chosen, which was interested in experience and meaning making (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The researchers' interpretivist, qualitative orientations informed the use of data triangulation, through gathering data from different sources to more deeply understand phenomena of interest (Jentoft & Olsen, 2017). In this case, as young people's lives are deeply bound in the context of school and home, young people's, parents', and teachers' views were sought via individual interviews to understand experiences of the program and its outcomes. The interest in both participants' experience and alignment of these with PYD outcomes informed the use of both a priori and emergent codes at the analysis stage.

The Five Cs of PYD were chosen as an outcomes framework due the strong evidence base for this model, and there being no agreed definition for PYD or outcomes framework existing in Aotearoa/New Zealand at the time. Given the varied components of the program, there appeared to be a good match between this program and the types of programs included in initial Five Cs studies, while a broad framework could capture a range of potential outcomes. Before selecting the Five Cs as an outcomes framework for the study, links between this model and program activities were explored by the researchers to check the potential relevance of the model, as shown in Table 1.

## PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

**Table 1. Program Links to the Five Cs**

Youth development outcome	A priori definitions	Links to program
Competence	<p><i>Positive view of one's actions in domain-specific areas including social, academic, cognitive and vocational. Social competence pertains to interpersonal skills (e.g., conflict resolution). Cognitive competence pertains to cognitive abilities (e.g., decision making). School grades, attendance and test scores are part of academic competence. Vocational competence involves work habits and career-choice explorations (Lerner, Lerner et.al., 2005, p. 23).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenging physical activities lead to physical competence.</li> <li>• Working with others in outdoor and community challenges leads to social competence.</li> <li>• Experiencing and completing new activities assists in identifying possible career options, leading to vocational competence.</li> <li>• Preparation for, completion of and reflection on activities leads to cognitive competence.</li> </ul>
Confidence	<p><i>An internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy; one's global self-regard, as opposed to domain specific beliefs (Lerner, Lerner et.al., 2005, p. 23).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of all activities will lead to a global sense of accomplishment.</li> </ul>
Connection	<p><i>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 (Lerner, Lerner et.al., 2005, p. 23).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support from the coordinating teacher to complete activities will lead to increased connection with the teacher.</li> <li>• Increased connection with family and other adults in the community through participation in community service and passion projects.</li> <li>• Strengthened peer connections through group-based outdoor challenges.</li> </ul>
Caring	<p><i>A sense of sympathy and empathy for others (Lerner et.al., 2005, p. 23).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-service components will develop empathy for others.</li> </ul>



**Table 1 (continued)**

Youth development outcome	A priori definitions	Links to program
Character	<i>Respect for societal and cultural rules, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity (Lerner, Lerner et.al., 2005, p. 23).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect for self, others, property and community developed through all aspects of the challenge.</li> <li>• Moral development through having a role to play and something to contribute to community.</li> </ul>
Contribution	<i>A young person enacts behaviors indicative of the Five Cs by contributing positively to self, family, community, and, ultimately, civil society (Lerner, Lerner et al., 2005, p.23).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution is built into the challenge via community service.</li> <li>• Young people may become more involved in the school or wider community as a result of program experiences.</li> </ul>

Schools were purposively selected to provide a range of sizes, locations, socioeconomic statuses and varying length of times in the program. All young people in the program in a participating school were invited to participate, and the first young person in each school to return consent forms was selected for interview. A total of six schools participated in the research. In each school, one young person, that child's parent/caregiver and the teacher responsible for the program in the school were interviewed, excepting one instance where there was no parent interview. Five of these schools were in urban areas and one was situated rurally. Four schools were in high socioeconomic areas, while two were in located in low socioeconomic areas. In four participating schools, Pākehā (European New Zealand) students made up the largest ethnic group in the school, while in one school Māori made up the largest ethnic group and in one school Pacific Island ethnicities made up the largest group. One school was new to the program, with others ranging from one to four years' involvement.

Semi-structured individual interviews were used: these did not ask about the Five Cs directly but asked interviewees to comment broadly on their observations of the program and what young people gained from participating. Interviewees' observations could include behaviours, attitudes and values developed through program participation. Interviews occurred near the end of the program. All interviewees consented to participate and ethics approval was granted

### PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

for the study. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, which aims to identify commonalities, differences and relationships within the data (Gibson & Brown, 2009). The Five Cs of PYD acted as a priori codes, using the definitions in Table 1. Where an excerpt related to more than one C it was coded in both places. These formed an initial organising structure for the data, which could then be interpreted inductively (Fereday & Muir-Cochran, 2006). Each C was then further analyzed to identify any emergent, data-driven themes.

## Results

All of the Five Cs and the sixth C of contribution were evident in interviewees' discussion of this school-based program. In this setting, the C of competence included physical, social, cognitive and vocational aspects. The C of confidence was seen as an overall belief in the capacity to achieve. The C of connection was perceived to be developed with peers, families, teachers and communities. The C of caring was evidenced through young people's support of each other, especially during outdoor challenges. The C of character was seen in the way young people learned to look beyond themselves and in their demonstration of tenacity during challenging experiences. The C of contribution was evidenced by young people's desire to contribute further to the community, and leadership at home and in school. The three Cs of competence, confidence and connection were identified, and discussed in depth, by all interviewees. Caring was discussed by 15 interviewees, character by 17 interviewees and contribution by 13. These themes are discussed below, while Table 2 shows example quotes from interviews.

### *Competence*

All interviewees discussed aspects of competence. Four subthemes emerged: physical competence, cognitive competence, social competence and vocational competence.

Young people identified how challenges were fun and developed new physical competencies, such as learning how to mountain bike. These experiences created feelings of achievement and pride related to confidence and overall self-belief. Physical competence was discussed infrequently by teachers and parents.

Young people, teachers and parents all identified cognitive competencies, and these were especially highlighted by teachers and parents, who talked about self-management and the planning and execution of tasks. Parents described examples where young people had

### PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

organized things for themselves, such as finding community-service opportunities, and saw these as increasing independence and maturity in an age-appropriate way.

Young people, teachers and parents discussed social competencies, and identified working in teams and learning to work with different people as key program benefits. Vocational competence was noted especially by parents, who saw the key value of other competencies in their transferability to high school and the working world. Teachers saw the skills developed as valuable for future education, while young people could see how the skills they learned were transferable to other areas, especially in the classroom.

### ***Confidence***

All interviewees discussed confidence and this was a key theme of interviews. Confidence related to the ways young people developed a belief in their capacity to achieve. Young people saw their confidence develop as they had fun, pushed their comfort zones and tried new things. As a result of the new skills developed through these experiences, and the accompanying pride, young people felt that they could achieve in other areas.

Teachers commented on changes they had seen in young people throughout the program and, like young people, saw challenges as an opportunity to have fun, try new things and push comfort zones. Teachers linked this to the development of confidence and described students who had been fearful of participating in activities learning to take risks or embrace different perspectives. Parents discussed how completing something new and difficult developed confidence and self-belief, which was seen as valuable for approaching future challenges. Discussions of confidence showed a strong relationship between competence and confidence in the way that the development of competencies created a sense of success and pride, leading to a more global belief in ability, allowing young people to keep trying more new things.

### ***Connection***

Connection was discussed by all participants and appeared to develop in all parts of the program, especially through outdoor activities. Four subthemes emerged from the data: connection with peers, connection with teachers, connection with family and connection with community.

PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

Young people spoke most about the connections they developed with peers. Undertaking difficult tasks together in group settings fostered new friendships, strengthened peer bonds provided encouragement and made the program fun. Parents and teachers observed peer connections, particularly through working with new and different people and learning to support others. Parents saw these connections as valuable in that they perceived them as pro-social and preparing young people for interacting with others in the future.

Teachers identified enhanced connections between themselves and young people, especially when the teacher had participated in outdoor challenges. Some saw the encouragement their participation provided as key to helping young people complete challenges. Where teachers were heavily involved in the program, young people identified them as key support people in the program and beyond.

Parents reflected on strengthened family bonds through their involvement in, or support of challenges. Teachers commented on how the program provided opportunities for families to be involved and for these relationships to be strengthened. Connection to family was infrequently mentioned by young people, however, when discussed they recognized that adults in their family had supported them to complete challenges.

Teachers and parents observed connections developing with community members, who provided young people with practical support to complete challenges, affirmation and opportunities to look beyond themselves. When identifying community connections, young people spoke about the ways community members had provided opportunities and support.

Connection, while an outcome, appeared key to the experience of the program in the ways interviewees described connection in relation to other Cs. Young people, teachers and parents discussed how connections facilitated practical opportunities to learn new skills, such as teamwork or learning a new hobby, supporting competence. Young people and adults identified how peers, teachers, family and community provided support and encouragement to complete difficult tasks, developing both confidence and competence. Young people identified how this encouragement supported them not to give up, linking with tenacity and the C of character. Young people also identified how being in challenging situations with peers provided opportunities to help each other, while adults saw this as developing empathy, linking to the C of caring. Adults identified how helping peers and building connections with community members enabled young people to see beyond their own immediate needs, relating to the C of

### PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

character. For young people, seeing a positive impact on others from their actions, or receiving positive feedback encouraged a desire to contribute further, linking to contribution.

#### *Caring*

Fifteen of 17 participants spoke about caring, although this was not discussed in depth. Caring was identified in the ways young people helped and cared for each other throughout the program. Young people, teachers and parents observed caring in a similar way, mostly through behaviour during outdoor challenges, where young people were seen to help and be helped by peers during difficult times. Parents observed caring attitudes develop through community service as young people developed awareness of the needs of others, which is also related to the C of character.

#### *Character*

The a priori definition of character refers to correct behavior, adhering to societal rules and morality (Lerner, Lerner et al., 2005). Correct behavior and morality are difficult to determine in a diverse society such as Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, all interviewees spoke to character and two key subthemes emerged in relation to the values developed by young people in the program; the first of these was tenacity and the second was expressed as “looking beyond yourself.”

Tenacity was discussed by young people, teachers and parents in the ways young people worked hard to complete tasks that were not always easy. Young people spoke about attitudes related to not giving up during specific challenges and on the program overall. Teachers discussed specific behaviours, where young people pushed themselves and took risks, especially in outdoor challenges. Parents spoke about resilience and saw overcoming challenges in the program as important to help prepare young people for the challenges of life.

“Looking beyond yourself” referred to the ways young people learned to be more aware of those outside their immediate sphere. Young people began to see that they had a role to play in the wider community. Teachers observed young people looking beyond themselves through awareness of others in outdoor challenges and in the classroom, while parents observed young people being more aware of others through the relationships and attitudes developed during community service.

### **Contribution**

Contribution was discussed by 13 interviewees. Two subthemes emerged: the desire to contribute and leadership. The desire to contribute beyond the program was expressed by some young people as they spoke about wanting to be more involved in the community or complete additional community service. This was closely related to young people's growing ability to look beyond themselves, and the C of character.

Leadership was discussed most frequently by teachers, who commented on instances of young people volunteering to go first, or taking on additional tasks or school roles such as head boy or girl. Leadership development was often a key motivator for running the program in the school, and two young people noted that they could use their experiences to encourage or advocate for others. Two parents identified young people taking on increased responsibility at home as a result of the program, while in three families, young people contributed to program costs.

**Table 2. Themes From Data Related to Each of the Five Cs and Example Quotes From Interviews With Young People, Teachers, and Parents**

<b>Competence:</b> Physical competence; social competence; cognitive competence; vocational competence.	
Young people	<i>It's really good for young people because you can start new hobbies, and explore new outdoor adventures. It increases, like, it's really good for social skills because you get to know everybody better.</i>
Teachers	<i>So, this was pushing the boat out for quite a few of them, to say, "Mum doesn't ring the old people's home and ask if you can go in, you've got to do it."</i>
Parents	<i>I think for our children today, as adults in the future, the main skills that they are going to need will be working as a team, complex problem-solving, overcoming challenges and resilience, and I think [the program] will help a lot with that.</i>
<b>Confidence:</b> Belief in capacity to achieve.	
Young people	<i>They [young people] are thinking that they can achieve many other things; like, normally before they might not have thought they could do things, but now that they've accomplished the [program] thing they can do bigger things.</i>
Teachers	<i>Some parents go, "Who is going to be looking after them? It's going to be dark." I say, "Yeah that's the whole purpose of it, this is why I want them to go, cause they need to understand that we are all not going to be around forever, so I want them to know how to become independent, be confident."</i>
Parents	<i>[The young people can learn to] explore and be confident, to be proud of who they are.</i>

PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

**Table 2 (continued)**

<b>Connection:</b> Peer bonds; family bonds; teacher bonds; community bonds.	
Young people	<i>I think the most important one is making friends. Because I didn't really know anyone, but I made quite a few friends and then you just help each other out all the way through.</i>
Teachers	<i>Some of the kids that are in the library stacking books and things, they end up getting a really good relationship with certain librarians.</i>
Parents	<i>Yeah, probably the one benefit I've received from it is actually getting to know my daughter on a different level, and I suppose that's been quite nice seeing that growth in her.</i>
<b>Caring:</b> Caring behaviors towards others.	
Young people	<i>Like if someone hurts themselves everyone will like come in and help them out.</i>
Teachers	<i>So, when we were having to climb up bits or move over rocks that were slippery, a couple of the kids kept falling quite a bit. And because of that there was some other kids that noticed and they kind of grabbed each side of the person and said, "Come on, you can stay in between us."</i>
Parents	<i>As soon as they are in the program they experience how to respect the other person, put the other person first.</i>
<b>Character:</b> Looking beyond yourself; tenacity.	
Young people	<i>Even if it's kind of hard you keep pushing at it and you keep trying.</i>
Teachers	<i>They're thinking not just about themselves but pushing themselves into a place that's not necessarily comfortable, either to achieve something personally, or for the greater good of the group.</i>
Parents	<i>This time last year she was quite self-centred and it was just kind of all about her, whereas now, the idea of community service has opened her up to putting her head over the fence and checking with our neighbours.</i>
<b>Contribution:</b> Leadership; desire to contribute further.	
Young people	<i>They can stand up for their friends and themselves when they need to.</i>
Teachers	<i>They're taking on more of a leadership role, particularly from a quiet perspective rather than a standing up bossing perspective; they will coordinate things</i>
Parents	<i>I think even in their family I think that they feel more confident and able to have a bigger role in family, or friend circles.</i>

**Discussion**

This study looked qualitatively at an Aotearoa/New Zealand-based PYD outdoor-education program in schools using the Five Cs model of PYD. The study looked at whether the Five Cs

PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

were perceived to be present in the program and how the program was seen to contribute to their development. The views of young people, parents and teachers were gathered, providing an opportunity to explore additional perspectives of the Five Cs.

***The Presence of the Five Cs***

The presence of all the Cs suggests that participant perceptions of program outcomes aligned with PYD. This is consistent with other Five Cs studies that have demonstrated young people in PYD programs experienced growth in all Five Cs as well as contributing towards their communities (Fuller, et al., 2013; Lerner & Lerner, 2013). Further, the findings align with local studies of PYD programs, which, although not using the Five Cs, identify related outcomes of social self-efficacy, resilience, sense of community and self-esteem (Deane & Harré, 2014; Furness, Williams, Veale, & Gardner, 2017; Grocott & Hunter, 2009), and experiences of connection and belonging (Arahanga-Doyle et al., 2018; Hunter et al., 2013).

Whilst all Five Cs were identified, themes within confidence, competence and connection were discussed in most depth by interviewees. Given the program's use of challenging activities that build skills and stretch young people's comfort zones in the context of peer and adult relationships, it follows that interviewees would name outcomes of confidence, competence and connection most readily. However, this may also suggest these outcomes were perceived as stronger or more important by interviewees. Data showed notable overlap between confidence and competence, which has also been identified in the Five Cs measure (Lerner, Lerner et al., 2005). New and challenging activities developed competence, leading to confidence, which gave young people the self-belief to try more new things and develop further.

The C of connection was evident in participant discussions of all parts of the program and also seemed to provide necessary conditions for success. Connections with peers and adults appeared to provide support and encouragement to undertake challenging activities, push comfort zones, and take on new responsibilities, developing confidence and competence. Connections made during the program provided opportunities to consider others' needs, care for others, and recognize opportunities to contribute, related to the Cs of character, caring, and contribution. This suggests that, in this setting, connection is both developed as a result of the program and is key to facilitating other outcomes. The view of the C of connection as supporting other Cs to develop is similar to studies showing that belonging and collective identity support other outcomes to occur (Arahanga-Doyle et al., 2018; Scarf et al., 2018).



### PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

Themes appearing within the Cs of caring, character and contribution were discussed in less depth. Caring featured largely in relation to the help and care young people showed each other in activities. It was initially anticipated by the researchers that caring behaviors would be linked to the community-service aspect of the program. However, it seemed that the challenging nature of outdoor activities and strong bonds developed through these provided the most opportunities for young people to care and show compassion.

Character, although difficult to define in a diverse society such as Aotearoa/New Zealand, was discussed in relation to both community service and outdoor challenges, and expressed in the themes of “looking beyond yourself” and tenacity. “Looking beyond yourself” was demonstrated in young people’s recognition of the world beyond their own personal and immediate need, and related to the Cs of caring and contribution. Tenacity emerged, as young people pushed through challenges and overcame perceived difficulties.

It was anticipated by the researchers that young people would show evidence of the C of contribution beyond the program, in their schools, families and communities. This occurred to an extent, with teachers highlighting the development of leadership at school and some parents identifying increased contribution at home. Extended contribution to the community was discussed mainly in relation to young people’s desire to contribute further. School and home may provide more accessible opportunities for contribution beyond the program.

### ***The Views of Adults on Outcomes and the Five Cs***

This study is the first to describe adult perceptions of a youth development program through the lens of the Five Cs and has highlighted some differences between adult (teachers and parents) and youth views. For adults, the C of competence was discussed mainly in relation to planning and managing tasks, and the C of confidence was seen as valuable in supporting young people to enter high school or the working world with strong self-belief. Teachers also saw confidence as important for current school success. Young people tended to focus on competence and confidence as they related to their immediate experiences of the program and school.

For parents and teachers, the C of character, demonstrated through tenacity and the ability to stick with something difficult, was also seen as a useful template for tackling future challenges. When discussing contribution, teachers focused on leadership and the benefits this provided to the school community. The identification of different and additional aspects of the Cs by some

### PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

adults is similar to findings of King et al. (2005), which noted that parents and older adolescents identified a greater number of components of thriving than younger adolescents. If adults close to young people observe more and broader benefits, the inclusion of key adults may be important when assessing program outcomes, and their views may help to further develop definitions and measures of the Five Cs. Conversely, the different perspectives of adults are important to hold in mind, as it is often adults who set, conduct and interpret the results of program evaluations.

The study suggested different priorities of adults and young people in program participation. For young people, fun and peer connection appeared to be key and outdoor activities were a highlight. This links with Roth & Brooks-Gunn's (2003) assertion that activities are the draw-cards for PYD programs. For parents, supporting preparedness for the future was deemed important while teachers appeared to prioritize benefits for the school community. Understanding whether youth and adults prioritize different outcomes in other program settings may be important to practitioners when designing and promoting programs

### ***The Five Cs in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Context***

These findings provide insight into qualitative expression of the Five Cs in an Aotearoa/New Zealand school-based program. The presence of the Five Cs in this study suggests that despite hesitation on the part of some researchers to apply Western models in diverse contexts, the Five Cs were relevant in this case. The qualitative nature of this study highlighted that the C of connection appeared to play a role as an outcome and as a key program feature, which may be different from other contexts in which the Five Cs have been studied. These findings suggest that the Five Cs warrant further exploration in Aotearoa/New Zealand, including determining whether the Five Cs is a useful template to map program activities (Table 1) and understand program outcomes in a range of settings. This may support practitioners to more clearly link PYD theories with program activities and outcomes measurement, as recommended by Lerner and colleagues (2011).

### ***Limitations and Future Research***

Due to the nature of this small study, three key limitations are evident; namely, the small sample size, the lack of collection of ethnicity data and that data was only collected at one point in time. As such, it cannot yet be determined if the findings are transferable beyond this study, how outcomes differed from the start of the program or if they were maintained over time.

### PYD in an Aotearoa/New Zealand Program Context

Additionally, interviewing those who were first to return consent forms may have biased participant selection towards those who were more diligent and therefore possibly more likely to experience positive outcomes. Limitations in this study could be addressed by further quantitative measures of the program, pre and post program, and through additional qualitative research with a larger sample of young people. Further exploration the Five Cs in Aotearoa/New Zealand is needed to validate its relevance to other local programs and could be achieved through qualitative investigation in a number of programs and subsequent testing of a Five Cs measure. Future research may also help to further explore any differences in adult and youth perceptions of the Five Cs, overlaps between the Cs, and if there are differences in perceptions of the Five Cs in different program contexts. This may contribute to global scholarship about the expression of PYD in varied settings.

### **Summary**

This study looked qualitatively at an Aotearoa/New Zealand-based PYD outdoor-education program in schools, using the Five Cs model. The perspectives of young people, teachers, and parents were gathered. All Five Cs were described by interviewees and the sixth C of contribution was also observed. This suggests that PYD was present in this program and that the Five Cs model warrants further exploration as a way to understand programs and their outcomes in other settings in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

In this setting, the Cs of confidence, competence and connection featured strongly, and the development of the C of connection appeared to be important to young people's experience of the program. Young people and adults prioritized different aspects of program outcomes, with adults focusing more on future impacts and young people identifying more immediate benefits. Understanding more about differences between adult and youth views of programs may be helpful to practitioners in designing and promoting youth development programs and the study suggests value in exploring the expression of the Five Cs in different program settings to assist in developing broader understandings of PYD.

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