THE CONCEPTUALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH LEADERSHIP:
A YOUTH-DRIVEN MODEL

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Abstract

The aim of the current dissertation was to produce a model of youth leadership development, rooted in a youth engagement framework, created through the voices of youth leaders themselves. Participants were 16 youth leaders in the Respect in Schools Everywhere (RISE) Program, a school-based, youth engagement, anti-violence program. Three different qualitative methodologies were utilized to analyze the interviews of youth leaders to develop and validate this model of youth leadership development. Specifically, an inductive, cross-case and a deductive case-based thematic analysis of pre- and post-program interviews of seven youth leaders were conducted to describe and develop the model of youth leadership. A template analysis of nine other youth leaders' post-program interviews was conducted to validate, confirm, and expand the model.

A final model of youth leadership development was created that answers the following questions: (i) How do youth leaders understand and conceptualize leadership? (ii) What leadership-related development do the youth leaders report through their experience in a youth engagement program? (iii) What youth engagement programmatic practices, or mechanisms, are associated with the leadership-related outcomes? Specifically, youth conceptualized leadership as sharing knowledge, taking initiative, being a role model, having social skills, being respectful, and as a group process. For youth, leadership was seen as a collective capacity; one that relies on a team-based approach. Through applying the main tenets of youth engagement, such as meaningful involvement, opportunities to lead, and the support of a caring adult, youth endorsed development in their leadership skills, social network, self-concept, and engagement in

their school and community. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that youth

engagement is a promising model for developing youth leaders. Further, not only do

youth have insights and skills to impact their schools and communities, but they also

have important contributions to make to the development of theory and practice.

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"Young people want to be engaged as change-makers in their lives, their families and their communities. They are disproportionately involved in and affected by the problems that beset their communities — and they must be part of the solution."

(Pittman, Martin & Williams, 2007, The Forum for Youth Investment)

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The Conceptualization and Development of Youth Leadership:

A Youth-Driven Model

Leadership skills are essential in today's economically, politically, and socially challenging world. As such, providing youth with opportunities to learn these skills is critical for their successful transition into adulthood. Development of leadership is not only good for the youth themselves, but for it is good for communities, organizations, and society most broadly (MacNeil, 2006). Although youth leadership programming is vast, the practice is often a-theoretical and lacks an evidence base. Little is known about how youth become leaders (Kirshner, 2004). Further, youth are often referenced as the "leaders of tomorrow"; a statement that undervalues their current skills, abilities, and insights (MacNeil, 2006). In fact, youth are leaders in many ways. Although not all of them are presidents of their student government, many have part-time jobs, babysit, and volunteer. They have strong voices amongst their peers and might be involved in their schools or communities. Through these activities, youth develop skills and their own conceptualizations of leadership (van Linden & Fertman, 1999). To date, very limited research has explored youth leadership through the voices of the youth themselves. Definitions and theories that do exist are heavily rooted in the adult literature or are created using a top-down approach from the adult program developers' perspectives of what youth leadership entails and how it should be fostered. Thus, the goal of the present dissertation is to better understand how youth who were engaged in a youth leadership program describe and develop leadership qualities.

Current conceptualizations of youth leadership

Leadership in the adult literature has been defined in many ways, describing a variety of diverse characteristics and traits, including ideas such as unleashing energy in others (Peters & Austin, 1985) and influencing others' actions (Halloran & Benton, 1987). Similarly, there is no consensus when describing leadership as it pertains to youth. Although many definitions exist, they are often rooted in the adult literature and include components like authority, influence, and experience. However, it is unrealistic to suggest that these qualities are essential for youth leaders to possess, given their stage of development (Kress, 2006). Youth typically have little authority or influence on their surrounding environments and have likely had little experience that would support their overall development as leaders.

In response to this lack of clarity or consensus, many programs that aim to develop youth leadership skills do not subscribe to any particular conceptualization of youth leadership (Klau, 2006). According to Klau, the danger of not defining leadership is that opportunities to provide appropriate education are missed and effective application of skills is unlikely. When programs do adopt definitions of youth leadership, they are created by the program developers and do not consider the youths' perspectives or understanding of leadership. This results in programs developing leaders in different ways, and not accounting for the way youths themselves view leadership or leadership development. For example, Klau conducted a grounded theory analysis of the pedagogies of three youth leadership education programs and uncovered eight different conceptualizations of youth leadership endorsed by the adult facilitators of the program

(see Appendix A). While most of these conceptualizations were rooted heavily in research that exists on adult leadership (e.g., Gardner, 1995; Wilner, 1984), some concepts also revealed skills that youth leaders might possess, such as charisma, ability to manage interpersonal relationships, and engagement in meaningful issues. Importantly, none of these programs queried youth directly about their understanding of leadership.

One model of leadership that has promising applications to youth differentiates between skills or activity-based, and identity-based leadership qualities (van Linden & Fertman)[1]. Activity-based leadership focuses on a specific exchange of information between the leader and the led (Hollander, 1986). This type of leader is someone who makes decisions, tells people what to do, identifies problems and solutions, and gets things done (van Linden & Fertman, 1999). A more complex and meaningful type of leadership is identity based. This type of leadership focuses on the process of "being" a leader (Downton, 1973; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987), placing importance on the youth valuing themselves as role models and recognizing their abilities to influence others in a positive way. In other words, there is a difference between doing leadership and feeling like a leader (van Linden & Fertman, 1999). The simple accumulation of leadership related skills does not necessarily equate to leadership (Kress, 2006). Characteristics of

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[1] van Linden and Fertman (1999) referred to activity-based leadership as transactional leadership, and identity-based leadership as transformational leadership. However, in the present dissertation, I use the terms "activity-based" and "identity-based" to avoid confusion, because the leadership literature generally uses the terms *transactional* and *transformational* to mean something different (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). More specifically, transactional leadership is responsive and based on the notion that leaders reward the performance of their followers and punish non-compliance. In contrast, transformational leadership is proactive and focuses on achieving the group's goals through inspiring followers and activating morality and values. In turn, followers identify with the leader and his or her vision and mission, and perform beyond expectation (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Avolio et al., 1999; Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978).

identity-based leaders include valuing the participation and contribution of others, taking all viewpoints into account before making a decision, developing the self first in order to be a better contributor to the group, and sharing leadership by recognizing the power of the group (van Linden & Fertman, 1999).

Other researchers have broadened their understanding of leadership, from top-down, hierarchical styles, where one individual assumes the role as leader and acts as an authority, to more participatory, relational styles, where individuals work together and collaborate to effect change (Avolio, 2007; Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, & Osteen, 2006; MacNeil, 2006). This new conceptualization emphasizes social and emotional competencies, like self-awareness, empathy, and relationship-building skills (Kahn, Hewes, & Ali, 2009). Further, leadership is no longer understood as an individual quality, but is considered a collective capacity where decision-making occurs through a team-based approach (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). Therefore, collaboration, communication, and interpersonal skills appear to be critical for leaders to possess (Conner, & Strobel, 2007; Kahn et al., 2009).

It is clear that there are a number of skills, qualities, and descriptions that are associated with youth leadership. Although this breadth in understanding allows programs flexibility in formulating goals and supporting youth with various strengths and needs, it also hinders researchers to grow the field of youth leadership in meaningful ways. A comprehensive model of youth leadership that accounts for the developmental stage of adolescence could guide program development, not only in its goals, but also in the process of developing leadership. Individuals who work with youth can understand

the role youth can play in decision-making and the impact that they can have on social matters (Conner & Strobel, 2007).

Finally, this research is scant in describing youth leadership from the perspective of youth themselves. It seems presumptive to ascribe meaning to the experience of youth leadership without asking or considering the voices of youth. Roach and her colleagues (1999) were first to identify that youth emphasize the importance of group processes in how leadership happens. Following this, Dempster and Lizzio (2007) found that youth preferred frameworks of leadership that highlighted group processes and action over individual, competitive models. Lastly, Wu, Akiva and Van Egeren (2014) conducted a content analysis on 42 youths' responses to the question, "what does it mean for youth to be leaders" and yielded six conceptual ideas. Specifically, youth noted that leaders are relational, take initiative, act as role models, have skills, are dependable, and are powerful and in control. These researchers and others have also found that youth's conceptualizations of leadership change as they are exposed to leadership opportunities (Komives, et al., 2006; Wu et al., 2014). For example, in studying leadership identity development in college students participating in a leadership course, Komives et al. (2006) found that over time, students began to value interdependence with others. These students shifted their conceptualizations from focusing leadership internally to a focus on participatory and group-based leadership. The present study expands this research by developing a model of youth leadership from the voices of youth themselves.

Youth leadership development

  The context of adolescence. Adolescence is a time of change and transition, marked by developmental struggles that youth face as they prepare for the tasks of adulthood. Three qualities or struggles of adolescence are specifically related to the understanding of leadership and leadership development, such that adolescence might represent a critical and optimal period for leadership development. Firstly, the adolescent perspective is one of idealism. They dream of ideal families, schools, and societies, and conceive of idealistic solutions to the world's problems (Muuss, 1980). Secondly, adolescence is marked by a quest for independence, such that as youth grow older they begin to make more decisions for themselves and rely less and less on parents and teachers for support in these decisions (Juhasz, 1982). As they become increasingly confident in their own ability to make these decisions, they begin to feel responsible for their own lives (Cobb, 1992). Lastly, adolescence is a critical period for identity formation. During this stage, adolescents begin to develop a social conscience and attempt to clarify their role in society (Erikson, 1968: Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). Through their experiences, identity achievement for many youth is resolved between ages 16 to 18 (Erikson, 1968; Klimstra, Hale, Raaijmakers, Branje, Meeus, 2010; Marcia, 1994). According to Erikson (1968), identity achievement occurs when adolescents have a sense of their occupational goals, gender role, and political and religious values. Additionally, identity achievement occurs when beliefs, attitudes, habits, and motives are established (Marcia, 1994). Varied experiences and opportunities allow adolescents to develop and form a strong sense of self.

As youth negotiate these three attributes, adolescence might represent an ideal period for leadership development. These tasks also provide insight into how adults can support youth leadership development. For example, adolescents' idealistic perspectives often lead to social activism, steering adolescents to become involved in social or political causes which allow them to explore their ideals and gain experience (van Linden & Fertman, 1999). Leadership development should engage youth in their idealism, allowing them to lead in meaningful ways for issues they care about. Further, adolescents' unique need for supported independence requires that programs designed to develop leadership in youth be developmentally sensitive. Youth need to feel as though they can make decisions on their own, with decreasing support from adults so that they can feel confident in their own abilities and responsible for their leadership. Last, given that adolescence represents a critical period for identity formation, youth who have opportunities to lead and develop associated skills are more likely to integrate being a leader into their emerging sense of identity.

Gardner (1995) suggested that leadership skills begin to form before age five, but develop remarkably in adolescence. This finding highlights that leadership is a developmental process that occurs over time. However, little is known about effective programming for leadership development in youth, and even less is known about developmentally appropriate programs.

Outcomes of efforts to develop youth leadership. Although many youth leadership programs exist, few describe what outcomes youth gain through involvement in these programs. The limited research on this has reported a variety of areas of

development in psychosocial, cognitive, behavioural, and socio-political domains (MacNeil, 2006). Youth involved in leadership programs often gain increased responsibility, and self-esteem, as well as improved academic achievement, peer relationships, and communication skills (Bloomberg, Ganey, Alba, Quintero, & Alvarez Alcantara, 2003; Hindes, Thorne, Schwean, & McKeough, 2008; Karnes & Bean, 1995; Lloyd, 2001). Moreover, little is known about the particular practices or programmatic structures that facilitate this development of leadership in youth (Connor & Strobel, 2007). What is known is that leadership development is self-reinforcing, such that youth who are exposed to contexts that provide opportunities to develop skills and practice leadership are more likely to identify and feel comfortable as leaders (Murphy & Johnson, 2011; McNae, 2010).

Mechanisms that facilitate leadership development. Current efforts to teach leadership skills to youth are often didactic, involving classroom-type instruction on activity-based leadership skills, including public speaking, organization, and written communication. These models are most often "top down"; provided by adults to youth. Further, this learning often occurs in isolation of any real-life experience or opportunity to develop the skills and character traits of a leader (Heath, 2005; Kress, 2006).

Heifetz (1994) highlighted three pedagogical tools for leadership education. Case-in-point learning encourages students to discuss group dynamics and how they affect the group. This turns the classroom into a "leadership laboratory" where students analyze the leadership and group dynamics in the moment. Below-the-neck learning suggests that experiencing leadership is more intense than talking about leadership, and highlights the

importance of having real opportunities to demonstrate and practice leading. Lastly, Heifetz suggests that having a reflective practice provides students opportunities to learn from their experiences and adapt their leadership styles accordingly. Heifetz notes that to learn leadership skills, one must do leadership.

In Klau's 2006 review of youth leadership programs, 15 common practices used to teach leadership to youth emerged. Of note, all programs used more than one method for teaching youth leadership, suggesting that programs were flexible and integrative in their techniques. While many methodologies involved didactic and more traditional models of training (e.g., listening to expert panels, lecture format, receiving a material reward for demonstrating leadership), others involved engaging youth in the experience of leadership (e.g., case-in-point learning, community service activities). Other methodologies described in this review highlighted the importance of youth leadership development occurring in the context of a group (e.g., small-group discussion, problem-solving activities, reflective practice). Accordingly, youth leadership program developers ought to consider group processes and collective action, and focus on developing a sense of belonging with a group (Komives et al., 2006; Poletta & Jasper, 2001; Roach, Wyman, Brookes, Chaves, Health, & Valdes, 1999).

Research has pointed to a number of other potential programmatic practices and processes that facilitate youth leadership development. Some highlight the need for specific activities to encourage self-reflection and self-knowledge to facilitate identities as leaders (Conner & Strobel, 2007; Komives et al., 2006; Mohammed & Wheeler, 2001). Others have suggested that providing youth with opportunities to lead by making

decisions, setting their own rules, and asserting their ideas and opinions is essential to leadership development (Conner & Strobel, 2007; McLaughlin, 2000). Lastly, researchers have suggested that youth become leaders through collaborative and supportive partnerships with adult mentors (Conner & Strobel, 2007; Kirshner, 2004; Komives et. al, 2006; Roach et al., 1999). Together, many of these programmatic activities and processes consider the adolescents' developmental stage and are at the core of youth engagement (Pancer, Rose-Krasnor & Loiselle, 2002), suggesting that this model might be a promising framework for developing youth leaders.

Leadership through engagement

In November 2006, the United Nations organized the Global Youth Leadership Summit, which highlighted the importance of involving youth in addressing the problems of society, as they not only have the most at stake, but also have insights and ideas to contribute (Connor & Strobel, 2007). The Summit also aimed to "strengthen the worldwide movement to engage young people in decisions about the future" (United Nations, 2006). Although the youth engagement literature has always endorsed and promoted youth leadership by involving youth in leadership roles, this summit was the first to globally recognize the importance of youth engagement in the greater process of leadership development.

Youth Engagement is defined as "the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity with a focus outside of him or herself" (Pancer, et. al., 2002, as cited in the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, 2003, p.3). For youth to feel engaged, the activities must be relevant and important to their lives

(Pancer et al., 2002; Pereira, 2007; Rose-Krasnor, 2009). Participation in programs that espouse the youth engagement framework is meaningful as youth are given ownership of the program. They develop and deliver program goals, ideas and activities that are driven by them, rather than dictated by adults (Stoneman, 2002; Wood, Larson, & Brown, 2009). This ownership facilitates their idealistic perspectives and desire to positively impact their social worlds, while promoting their quest for independence. When adolescents have opportunities to engage in meaningful projects that they create, they build confidence, develop a sense of agency, and develop individual and interpersonal skills, including leadership abilities (Larson & Angus, 2011; Pearce & Larson, 2006).

Youth engagement is strengths-based, focusing on positive competencies and characteristics that youth possess, as opposed to focusing on their deficits. According to the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement (2003), programs that espouse this model have cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. That is, they teach youth new information and skills, provide emotional support through relationships with caring adults, and provide the opportunity for youth to impact their community in a meaningful way through activities or programs they create. In these ways, youth have the opportunity to be leaders. Theoretically, placing youth in new helping roles further empowers them and engages them in their communities (Benson, et al., 2006; Zeldin, 2004). Together, these experiences foster development toward achieving identities that include "leader".

One key component of youth engagement programs is the importance of positive adult partnerships in supporting youth and working with them towards meeting their goals (Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005; Pereira, 2007). Therefore, within a youth

engagement program, one specific mechanism for inspiring leadership qualities in youth may be positive relationships with an adult who emulates these types of leadership characteristics. In these programs, adult leaders provide structure, while assuming the role of mentor to the youth and facilitating opportunities for the youth to feel empowered to be leaders, themselves (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003; Larson, et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Stoneman, 2002). These adults take a facilitative approach, instead of a didactic one. In sum, youth engagement programs involve youth in meaningful activities developed by them in partnership with a caring adult. Creating these supportive environments where youth make decisions, set goals, and develop programs that they then implement should foster leadership (Kress, 2006).

      Marginalized youth. Youth engagement programming might be especially meaningful, impactful, and important for marginalized youths (Simkins-Strong, 2013; Stoneman, 2002; Zeldin, 2004). Adolescents who live in economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods are consistently provided with fewer opportunities and supports that meet their needs, and are less likely to participate in youth engagement programs, compared to other adolescents (Perkins, Borden, Villarruel, Carlton-Hug, Stone, & Keith, 2007; te Riele, 2006). Research findings consistently reveal that while unstructured free-time increases marginalized youths' risk for negative social, behavioural, and emotional outcomes (Mahoney, Stattin, & Lord, 2004), involvement in extracurricular activities compensates for risk (Scales, Roehlkepartain, Neal, Kielsmeier, & Benson, 2006; Schmidt, Shumow, & Kackar, 2012). Further, as marginalized youth are more likely to be involved in criminal activity, youth engagement programs might be especially impactful

because they place these youth in new roles as leaders and helpers (Ozer, 2005; Stoneman, 2002). Finally, these programs also promote positive relationships with a caring adult who can support them not only in the program's goals, but also in achieving their life's goals and connecting them with other community supports (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; Heinze, Jozefowicz, & Toro, 2010). Despite this clear impact, these programs are not commonly available or accessible in the communities where these marginalized youth live (Eccles, et al., 2003; Quane & Rankin, 2006; Zeldin, 2004).

The challenges of marginalized youth are only exacerbated by a change in the demographic landscape of Canada, which is resulting in an increase in marginalization. Recent statistics highlight Canada's increased urbanization and ethnic diversification. Research also suggests that poverty is on the rise, with predictions that middle-income neighbourhoods will virtually disappear by 2025, when almost 60% of neighbourhoods in Toronto could be low-income (MacDonnell, 2011; Toronto Community Foundation, 2012). The majority of Canadian youth live in urban areas that are increasingly racialized (Human Resource and Social Development Canada, 2005), and 70% of students in the Toronto District School Board represent ethnic minorities (TDSB, 2010). Despite this increase in ethnic diversity, only 13% of private and public sector leaders represent visible minorities (Cukier & Yap, 2009). These statistics highlight that across sectors, today's leaders do not reflect today's diversity. As a result of this, marginalized youth often associate leadership with being part of the ethnic majority and having power, and therefore might not include leadership possibilities within their developing sense of

identity (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). Because of this, there is even greater need to develop

leaders within marginalized communities. Providing access to programs for these youth

will lead to greater change and a more equitable future (Houwer, 2013). In the present

dissertation, I investigate how marginalized youth in a youth engagement program

conceptualize leadership and how they develop leadership skills and identities.

RISE (Respect in School Everywhere)

The Respect In Schools Everywhere (RISE) Program (Connolly et al., in press;

Moran & Weiser, 2007) is a manualized, youth-led violence prevention program

developed by East Metro Youth Services, an accredited mental health agency in Toronto.

Housed within a secondary school in a high-needs area of Toronto, RISE provides

violence prevention programming for the host school, as well as its feeder middle

schools. RISE was developed within a youth engagement framework. Experienced, full-

time mental-health professionals supervise and coordinate the RISE program. The

program staff recruits and trains a diverse group of students at the high-school level to

become youth leaders, known as "RISE Reps". Recruitment targets both students already

involved in the school and community, and students who are more marginalized and have

been reluctant to join extra-curricular activities in the past. Through intensive training (16

after-school sessions), RISE Reps receive knowledge in violence prevention and

education in leadership, communication, and conflict resolution. During these sessions,

the RISE staff helps to create a "safety net", where RISE Reps feel comfortable and safe

during training and during their time in the program. This net fosters respect among

group members and builds positive group cohesion. During the one session specifically

focused on leadership training, RISE Reps learn about leadership qualities and their own

leadership styles, and they develop skills required to prepare and deliver successful

presentations and workshops. During the final sessions, the Reps plan interactive

workshops addressing bullying, sexual harassment, and dating violence that they run in

the Grade 7 and 8 classes in their school's feeder middle schools, and in the Grade 9 and

10 classes in their own school. Throughout the year, the RISE Reps have access to

continued individual support from RISE staff members, who are available and present

within their school.

Present study

The aim of the current study is to develop an empirically and experientially

grounded model of youth leadership. More specifically, the overall goal is to investigate

common themes and individual differences in the RISE Reps' understanding of

leadership and how they develop as leaders. In order to accomplish this goal, this study

used a mixed-method, qualitative analysis of interviews of marginalized youth engaged

as leaders in the RISE program.

Following the framework of youth engagement, which holds that youth have

valuable contributions to make to practice, youth also have valuable insights to contribute

to research and subsequent theory. Qualitative methodology allows for a more nuanced,

detailed analysis of the experiences of youth, compared to more traditional quantitative

survey methods. These qualitative methods allow youth to give voice to the issues in

question: understanding youth leadership and how it is developed. Moreover, to

strengthen the validity of the qualitative findings, the present study employed three

different methodologies to develop a clear, valid, and reliable description and understanding of youth leadership development through the voices of the youth leaders, themselves. Specifically, three different qualitative methodologies were utilized to analyze the interviews of RISE Reps. Through analysis, a model of youth leadership was developed that ultimately answered three research questions.

1) How do RISE Reps understand and conceptualize leadership?

2) What leadership-related development do the RISE Reps report through involvement in a youth engagement program?

3) What youth engagement programmatic structures and practices, or mechanisms, are associated with the leadership-related outcomes reported by the RISE Reps?

These three questions were addressed through the integration of an inductive, cross-case thematic analysis, followed by a deductive case analysis. First, an inductive cross-case inductive analysis was conducted to identify, analyze, and report patterns across RISE Reps associated with leadership. In this way, commonalities across youth leaders were examined. Next, a deductive case analysis was used to describe each individual youth's conceptualization of leadership and process of development, based on the themes that were inductively derived during the cross-case analysis.

The final goal of the present study was to establish the validity of this model of youth leadership on another subset of youth leaders. This goal was accomplished by using a flexible template approach to validate and enhance the themes and overall model

developed through the thematic analyses. Ultimately through this mixed, analytic approach, a youth-guided model of youth leadership development was created.

Method

Participants

A total of 16 RISE Reps participated in the present study. Youth were in grades 10 – 12 (mean age at pre-test = 16.31, SD = 1.08), and ten were female. These students represented the multicultural demographic of the community in which they lived, identifying themselves as from six different ethnic groups including Caucasian (n = 3), African-Canadian (n = 1), Caribbean-Canadian (n = 4), Asian-Canadian (n = 1), South-Asian Canadian (n = 2), and mixed ethnicities (n = 5). Although 13 of the participants were born in Canada, seven spoke languages other than English at home. Further, their family compositions were diverse, with eight living with both biological parents, six living with only their mother, one living with his/her father, and one living with his/her grandparents[2].

For the inductive cross-case analysis and the deductive case analysis, the sample comprised seven of the 16 RISE Reps who had participated in interviews conducted before the start of the RISE program and after one year of involvement in the youth-led antiviolence program (mean age = 15.86, SD = 1.07). These students were in grades 10 – 12. These youth represented the multicultural demographic of the community in which they live, identifying five different ethnic groups. These included Caucasian (n = 1), African-Canadian (n = 1), Caribbean-Canadian (n = 2), South-Asian Canadian (n = 2),

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[2] To protect confidentiality, but facilitate readability, I use non-identifying pseudonyms for all youth participants.

and Mixed ethnicities (n = 1). Two of the participants were born outside of Canada, and

three spoke languages other than English at home. During the entry interviews, prior to

their involvement in the RISE program, these students were asked whether they believed

they were leaders and whether they had other extracurricular involvement. At the time of

entry into the program, five participants self-identified as "leaders", and four participants

indicated that they were involved in other extracurricular activities at or outside of

school. Demographics for these participants are presented in Table 1. Because these

participants were interviewed both before and after their involvement in the RISE

program, their data were used for the main model-building analyses of the present study.

Table 1.

Participant demographics for main analyses.

Name	Age	Born in Canada?	Self-identified as leader?	Involved in other extracurriculars?
Michael	16	No	No	No
Sarah	17	Yes	Yes	No
Ashley	14	Yes	Yes	No
Devra	17	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kevin	16	No	Yes	No
Danielle	15	Yes	Yes	Yes
Justin	16	Yes	No	Yes

*Note. Participants' names have been replaced with Pseudonyms to protect anonymity

For the final analysis (model validation using a flexible template approach), the sample was comprised of 3 male, and 6 female RISE Reps, who were only interviewed after their involvement in the RISE program (Mean age = 16.67, SD = 1.00). The lack of pre-program interviews for these students was related to two issues. Some of these students may have participated in entry interviews; however, they did not provide informed consent to participate in the research component of the program until later in the year. For others, however, they joined RISE later in the fall and were thus not present for the entry interview period. Of these nine Reps, only one was born outside of Canada, and two spoke languages other than English at home. Their ethnicities were Caucasian (n = 2), Caribbean-Canadian (n = 2), South-Asian (n = 1), and Mixed (n =4). Demographics for these participants are presented in Table 2. Statistical analyses revealed that the youth who only participated in exit interviews did not differ significantly from those who participated in both entry and exit interviews on all demographic variables (see Appendix B).

Table 2.

List of additional 9 participants in the follow-up analysis.

Name*	Age
Michelle	17
Josh	17
Fiona	17
Ryan	17
Monique	15
Brianne	17
Shawn	18
Laura	17
Andrea	15

***Note. Participants' names have been replaced with Pseudonyms to protect anonymity

Procedure

All RISE Reps participated in selection interviews prior to being accepted into the RISE program. A RISE program staff conducted this semi-structured interview in an effort to learn about the youths' previous leadership experiences, their reason for becoming involved in RISE, and their attitudes and knowledge regarding peer aggression (the RISE Rep Entry Interview, see Appendix C). Following their first year as RISE Reps, youths participated in a semi-structured exit interview (the RISE Rep Exit Interview, See Appendix D) about their participation in the RISE program. Exit interview

questions focused generally on the youths' overall experiences in RISE, and interviewers asked youths to describe themselves before and after participation in the program in an attempt to understand the program's impact on youths' views of themselves. Consistent with discovery research methodology, the concept of "leadership" was not directly asked about in exit interviews (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003), allowing the RISE Reps to spontaneously reflect upon their experiences in this program without any leading questions from researchers. Interviews were conducted by one of two researchers who worked together to become reliable on interview administration. Specifically, following collaboration on which questions to ask and when to ask them, the researchers observed each other conducting interviews and ensured they were asking questions in a similar manner and prompting interviewees in similar instances.

Participation in the research was voluntary and required a signed consent form from participants (and from a parent/guardian if they were under the age of 18). At the beginning of the RISE program, only seven of the 16 participants had provided informed consent. Accordingly, their entry and exit interviews were included and are the principal focus of the present study; used to build a model of youth leadership development. After their year in the RISE program, an additional nine RISE Reps agreed to participate in the exit interview for research purposes, and appropriate informed consent was obtained. These interviews were used to validate findings attained through inductive and deductive analysis of the first seven participants' interviews.

Participants were compensated with a small honorarium for their involvement in the study. All interviews were tape-recorded and orthographically transcribed by trained

research assistants. These were checked for accuracy by the investigator. Transcriptions were assigned an identification code to protect confidentiality. In the present dissertation, these codes are replaced with pseudonyms to improve readability. This study was approved by the ethics review committees at York University and the Toronto District School Board, where the RISE program was housed.

Analyses

Three qualitative methodologies were utilized to address the study's goals. First, following Braun & Clarke's guidelines, an inductive, cross-case thematic analysis (referred to as "thematic analysis" throughout) was conducted to identify, analyze, and report patterns (i.e., themes) within the data (i.e., entry and exit interviews). Following this, a deductive, case-based thematic analysis (Patton, 1990) was employed to describe each participant's individual experiences with leadership and leadership development through their involvement in the program. Finally, in order to confirm, validate, and elaborate findings from the thematic analyses, a template approach (Crabtree & Miller, 1999) was employed to deductively code the exit interviews from the additional nine RISE Reps.

Atlas.ti (Version 7.1, 2013) was used for all coding and analyses. Atlas.ti allows for the systematic analysis, or "knowledge management" of unstructured data, such as large bodies of textual, graphical, audio, and visual data. The software allows for the management, extraction, exploration and comparison of pieces of data. In Atlas.ti the Hermeneutic Unit (HU) provides structure for each project, and acts as the "container" for the data associated with the project. Specifically, it holds the data, the codes, the

themes, and the analysis associated with these themes, allowing connections to be made at any level within the Hermeneutic Unit (Atlas.ti 7, User Manual).

Inductive cross-case thematic analysis (thematic analysis). Using Braun & Clarke's guidelines, the present dissertation employs thematic analysis (TA) to identify, analyze, and report patterns (i.e., themes) within the data (i.e., interviews) in order to answer the first three aforementioned research questions. It is important to note that in thematic analysis, researchers play an active role in the interpretation of data (Taylor & Ussher, 2001). Given my previous research experiences evaluating youth engagement programs, and my involvement in the larger RISE evaluation project (Connolly et al., in press), I am aware of the biases and framework that I bring to this research. More specifically, having worked with youth in a variety of capacities and settings, I have seen first hand how youth engagement programs support positive developmental outcomes. As such, I entered this research with a belief that involvement in these programs results in positive growth for youth. Further, as part of the RISE evaluation research team, I also believe in the mandate and purpose of the program, overall. As a result, I do not deny the active role I play in identifying the patterns and themes within the data. However, in analyzing interviews, I avoided reading literature pertinent to youth leadership until the investigation was completed to limit a priori theoretical commitments. I also attempted to "bracket" my preconceptions of youth engagement programs by recording them in a separate theoretical memo, as recommended by Rennie, Phillips, and Quartaro (1998).

In the present study, the inductive thematic analysis served as the main method for developing a youth-driven model of leadership development that included youths'

conceptualization of leadership, their perceptions of their own leadership-related development, and the mechanisms associated with this development. All interviews were coded by myself and an advanced research assistant. This research assistant was a graduate student whose research is in a different field of study and who had no prior involvement with the RISE program, but who has had significant training in research methodology.

In order to understand changes in both conceptualization and development through their involvement in the program, entry and exit interviews were coded and subsequently analyzed. Moreover, analysis occurred across interviews in order to analyze patterns of experience across RISE Reps. The entry interviews were coded first, with the intention of serving as a baseline for learning about the RISE Reps' initial understanding of leadership and levels of leadership abilities. Specifically, we identified units of text that described participants' reasons for involvement in the RISE program, their levels of involvement in extra-curricular activities prior to involvement in RISE, and any indication of leadership skills. Further, during entry interviews, youth were asked whether they believed they were leaders and why. Exit interviews were explored next for any mention of changes to the youth themselves and any indication of what program attributes the youth felt were responsible for creating these changes. Interviews were also explored for other program components that youth mentioned as important to their development and any examples that the youth provided that demonstrated leadership skill or associated leadership qualities. These categories of inquiry were used because they allowed for a broad understanding of leadership and leadership development as described

by the youth, but also answered the study's research questions. Overall, since a priori theoretical commitments were avoided, the concepts coded for were broad, and based on the research assistant's and my working understanding of development. With regards to skills, any mention of any skill development was coded so that assumptions regarding our understanding of leadership could be avoided.

Relevant units of text were summarized and assigned to categorical codes to facilitate organization of the text and thematic development (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Code names were created by staying as close to the participants' language as possible, so that interpretation of codes at this point could be minimized (Patton, 2002). Data were coded inclusively, so the relevant context was preserved. In some instances, coders selected entire paragraphs so that the context of the RISE Rep's comment could be understood. In other cases, a single sentence was sufficient. Also, codes were created freely so as not to miss any possible meaning from the data. Coders followed the rule, "when in doubt, code". Coders each kept a record of their interpretation and thoughts about the codes throughout the coding process in a separate thematic memo, which were later used to assist with creating themes.

The order of coding proceeded as follows: First, four entry interviews were coded together. This allowed the coders to discuss what information was considered relevant to this dissertation, and should thus be coded. Following this, the remaining three entry interviews were coded independently by myself and the research assistant, stopping after each interview to determine reliability (percent agreement), to discuss coding approach and reach consensus on any coding disagreements. However, because coding was being

done inductively, a decision was made to include any segment of text identified as important by either the research assistant or myself. This ensured that all data relevant to leadership in any way were captured. For the purpose of reliability, coding of each interview was compared to determine where coding did and did not match. This same process of coding occurred for exit interviews, as well (i.e., coding four interviews together, and then three interviews independently). On average across the six interviews coded independently (three entry and three exit), intercoder agreement was 67% (range = 55% - 68%). Importantly, because all identified text was included, reliability was further improved through a team approach to coding (Guest et al., 2012).

Following this initial coding, I collated and reviewed codes to remove redundancy in coding and sorted codes to begin identifying themes that describe the data. Repeated rounds of reading and categorizing the data allowed for themes to be derived from the data themselves, as opposed to a priori theoretical perspectives (Boyatzis, 1998). Further, a decision was made to follow Patton's (1990) analytic progression from semantic to latent thematic organization. This means that data were first organized to show patterns in semantic content, staying as close to the words of the participant as possible in the coding phase. Then, in the interpretation phase, latent themes were developed to describe the significance of the patterns and broader meanings and implications. These themes were reviewed, defined, and named; ensuring that they accurately reflected the data set. Themes were also discussed with the research assistant to ensure that they were meaningfully related to the data (Guest, et al., 2012). Direct quotes from the data were

grouped under each theme to illustrate the theme in participants' own words (Breakwell, 1995; Rice & Ezzy, 1999).

Although presented as a linear process, analysis was iterative and reflexive, involving constantly moving back and forth between the coded extracts, the entire data set, and the coders. This process allowed for the identification of recurrent themes across the interviews (Boyatzis, 1998; Fereday & Muir-Chochrane, 2006).

Deductive case analysis. Following the thematic analysis, I conducted a deductive case analysis (Patton, 1990) to describe variations in each RISE Rep's conceptualizations and leadership-related development over the course of his/her involvement in the RISE program. In contrast to the inductive, cross-case analysis, which looked at data (interviews) across participants, this analysis looked at data within participants. In this way, developmental and contextual variations in the model of leadership development were investigated. According to Patton (1990), cross-case and case-based methods of qualitative inquiry are not mutually exclusive, and studies can benefit from using both to describe the phenomenon in question. Where cross-case analysis groups together answers from different people to analyze patterns of experience, case analysis describes variations in answers, as researchers write a case study for each person interviewed in the study (Patton, 1990).

Based on themes that arose through the thematic analysis, each youth's unique experience in the RISE program was described and the themes he/she expressed through pre- and post interviews are reported. Specifically, entry and exit interviews were read successively for each RISE Rep. Descriptions of the students' past experiences in a

leadership role or extracurricular involvement were noted. I also was interested in their motivation for involvement in the RISE program. Next, the interviews were coded based on the themes established in the inductive thematic analysis so that each youth's conceptualization of leadership, leadership-related development, and mechanisms associated with this development could be described. From this information, I created summaries of each RISE Rep's "story" of leadership development and described themes they reported in their interviews.

Template Approach. In order to confirm, validate, and enhance findings from the thematic analyses, a template approach (Crabtree & Miller, 1999) was employed to deductively code the remaining nine exit interviews. In other words, this approach served as a method unto itself aimed to increase the validity of the current findings. A template approach uses codes outlined in a coding manual as the starting point of analysis, therefore legitimating the other qualitative approaches by safeguarding against three common critiques of qualitative methodology: fabricating evidence, discounting evidence, and misinterpreting evidence. Fabricating evidence is the unconscious "seeing" of themes in data based on a priori expectations that are not actually there (Dey, 1993). Discounting evidence involves ignoring text that suggests exceptions or new interpretations (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Lastly, misinterpreting evidence occurs when connections are made or themes are developed that are not accurate descriptions of the data themselves (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). The coding manual serves as a base for the expected connections, but a flexible approach to coding, along with a team of researchers coding, allows for new themes and new connections to emerge.

A coding manual was developed based on the dimensions and themes that arose from the inductive, cross-case thematic analysis. The purpose of the manual was to organize segments of similar text to search for confirmation and/or disconfirmation of the interpretations made through the thematic analysis. Initial coding for the template analysis was completed by the research assistant and myself who had assisted with the inductive, cross-case thematic analysis. This ensured that the same systematic process for inductive coding was taking place. Once codes were created, the identified segments of text were deductively sorted into the dimensions and their associated themes as outlined by the coding manual by a second research assistant and myself. If segments of text did not fit into the themes identified in the coding manual, they were placed in the "other" code for the purposes of sorting. The "other" code was then analyzed in order to expand or alter the leadership dimensions described in the thematic analysis.

The first three interviews were used as training, so that the second research assistant could learn the software and the template could be clarified and refined. In particular, one new theme emerged and one theme was clarified and expanded. The refined themes and coding manual are in Appendix E. The remaining six interviews were coded by both the research assistant and myself, stopping after each set of three to check reliability and discuss disagreements. Consensus was reached through discussion and clarification of ambiguous codes. This collaborative process is another method of establishing reliability, such that double-coded text is reviewed section by section and disagreements in coding are discussed, so that resolutions can be found and revisions to the coding manual can be made (Guest et al., 2012). Given that all interviews were

double-coded and all discrepancies were resolved, coding is considered highly reliable.

However, for the sake of completion, prior to discussing discordant coding, the final six

interviews coded by myself and the research assistant had an intercoder agreement of

68% (range = 63% - 75%). Agreement was defined as coding the same code in the same

theme. Importantly, coders always agreed (100% agreement) on which domain the code

belonged to (i.e., conceptualization of leadership, area of development, or mechanism of

development). When disagreement did occur, it was a result of confusion between

themes. Resolutions to these disagreements ultimately lead to refinement and clarification

of the final theme definitions.

<div align="center">**Results**</div>

Inductive Cross-Case Thematic Analysis: An Overview

In the next sections, results from the thematic analysis are presented. Codes and

subsequent themes clustered within three broad domains: Conceptualization of

Leadership Qualities, Leadership-related development, and Mechanisms for Leadership

Development.

Conceptualizations of Leadership describes what youth identify as the

characteristics, attributes, and abilities that are required to be a leader. Six themes

emerged within this domain. These themes emerged most commonly from entry

interviews, where youth were asked, "do you think you are a leader" and "what do you

think is the hardest part of being a leader". Exit interviews further added to this

information, as some youths incorporated comments about the qualities of leadership

within their responses to other questions regarding their experiences in the program.

Leadership-related Development refers to youths' descriptions of how they changed through their experiences in this youth leadership program. Three themes, or areas of development, emerged from this analysis. These themes emerged through analysis of both entry and exit interviews, when youths described themselves before and after program involvement.

Finally, *Mechanisms for Leadership Development* refers to program components that youth identified as responsible for creating the changes they experienced from involvement in the program. Six mechanisms emerged from this analysis. These themes emerged from analysis of exit interviews, when youth described the program components responsible for the changes they described in themselves. Domains and their related themes are described in Table 3.

Table 3.

Understanding leadership development: Domains and their related themes (n = number of participants identifying the theme).

Domain	Definition	*n*
Conceptualizations of Leadership		
Sharing Knowledge	Sharing knowledge by teaching peers or younger program recipients	4
Taking Initiative	Related to youths taking initiative to do something, taking charge of a program activity, or making a difference	4
Role Model	Youths relating to peers through shared experiences or having other youth emulate their positive actions/behaviours	5
Social skills	Ability to interact with peers positively, and feel comfortable engaging with peers they are not currently friends with	4
Respect	Respecting others opinions and ideas and understanding that all are valid	5
The "We" in Leadership	Descriptions of leadership experience using "we" instead of "I" language, or identifying with the RISE group identity	5
Leadership-related Development		
Skill Development	Any skill development, which included public speaking, communication skills, peer mediation, and program planning.	7
Social Development	Development of skills related to social interaction, including an increased peer network or ability to engage positively with peers	7
Self Development	Development of positive character traits, including self-advocacy skills, feeling stronger, happier, or more confident.	7

Mechanisms of Development

Training	Describes how the RISE Rep training resulted in development.	4
Opportunities to Lead	Having the opportunity to lead, through RISE workshops or other activities in their school.	5
Meaningful Involvement	Youth describing their development or experiences as impactful because of their interest and passion for what the program stands for and does.	2
Caring Adult	The impact of the program staff on their development	7
Group Dynamic	How the group dynamic resulted in developmental changes for the youth, including the positive atmosphere, working with other youth, or the format of group work	4

Conceptualizations of Leadership

Upon entering the RISE program, youth had varied conceptualizations of leadership. Although these conceptualizations can be described by six themes, not all youths identified all six in their description of leadership qualities. Further, three youth expanded their understanding of leadership through their involvement in RISE, describing additional conceptualizations in their exit interviews. Of note, although youth were directly asked about the qualities of a leader during entry interviews (i.e., in their responses to the question "are you a leader?"), there was no direct mention of leader in the questions of the exit interviews. Therefore, expanded conceptualizations were unprompted descriptions of how youth believed they were leaders in the school, and not a direct response to a question about how they understand leadership.

Sharing Knowledge. Youth leaders identified sharing of knowledge as a key component of being a youth leader, and believed that the key to making a difference was passing along information and sharing the knowledge they possess.

> I mean like me, being so passionate, if I'm talking, if I can't make that change that I want, I want someone to listen to me and be like you know what she's right, we should do that and help it progress into a ripple effect (Sarah)

One youth identified that youth sharing information about youth might be uniquely impactful, contrasting the knowledge of youth with that of adults.

> I think my belief is that children are just as capable of being leaders in the community as adults. I think even more so because children, we kind of are the future and so we kind of know how things are now better than most adults do cause in they're in the adult world and we're kind of in our own little world and we know how things go on here, like this, knowing that my grandma, like the things that she tells me and I know that grandma you don't know how things are now, so I think we kind of have that knowledge that many adults don't. (Devra)

Taking Initiative. Many youth described taking initiative to do something as an important quality of a leader. This theme emerged when youth leaders commented about instances that they took charge to do something about a situation or in the context of an activity that the group was coordinating. This theme also emerged in the context of youth making a difference in the lives of the program's recipients, their school, and their community.

> Something that I did that I'd never do, we were planning on an assembly and they wanted to write a speech. I've had really good ideas but I didn't want to say any…so and like, I saw that nobody was really taking the initiative to do it, so I did it and then I read it out loud and everyone really liked it, so I felt really good that they liked my speech.   (Danielle)

Role Model. Another conceptualization of leadership was being a role model. Youth described two types of role models in their descriptions of being a leader. First, youth identified feeling they could be a youth leader because they related to the youth based on shared experiences, including previous histories of victimization.

> I can see myself as a leader because what some of the problems that people are going, I've been through it. Like, I've been bullied before and stuff like that.   (Danielle)

Secondly, youths also explain that a leader is someone whose peers follow them because they set a good example.

> I don't get myself into any drama or anything and I try to make sure that my close friends and family don't get involved in anything. Like, set an example, basically.   (Ashley)

Social skills. According to the youth, another part of being a leader is having a large social network and being able to engage with peers. For example, in response to the

question, "what do you think is the hardest part of being a leader", Danielle said,

"Probably building a relationship with the people, being able to talk to them". Part of this

conceptualization also included youth commenting on being inclusive, and not

perpetuating social isolation and bullying. The youth leaders described instances before

their involvement in the program, when they would not engage with peers whom they did

not know or who were isolated by others in their peer group because of social stigmas.

Following involvement in the program, many youths described their interest and desire to

engage with and include all types of youth.

> I see myself trying to put forth the energy to like "Oh, do you wanna sit?
> What's up?" like try to talk to people like you know what I mean?   (Sarah)

Respect. Many youths indicated that an important quality of a leader is being able

to listen to others' opinions and ideas and respect differences. The RISE Reps

acknowledged that a leader needs to be able to recognize that others have good ideas,

even if they are different from one's own.

> How to respect other team members and that every advice of the team
> member is necessary in group work.   (Michael)

The "We" in Leadership. Throughout the interviews, youths conceptualized

leadership and their experiences through the lens of the group. This was revealed through

their use of "we" language throughout the interviews. Youths spoke about the power of

numbers in creating change.

> I think that if enough people are rallying for the same cause, I think it's more
> than doable.   (Sarah)

In the exit interviews in particular, it was apparent that many of the youths did not ascribe changes in their school to their own personal leadership efforts, but to the influence that the RISE group had as a whole.

> Because it meant that everything that we learned this year could actually be used in our lives. And not necessarily can be used in a campaign or in an assembly or in a debate, but could be used for something that actually affects people, that actually changes…small things in our school. To actually make a difference. (Devra)

Areas of Leadership-Related Development

Despite having participated in a youth leadership program, very few of the participants mentioned "leadership" or "leadership skills" as a direct outcome of their involvement in the program. Instead, they described changes in themselves that can be associated with leadership in the form of skill development, social development, and self development. During entry interviews, youth were asked what they hoped to gain during their involvement in the program. These "hopes to gain" similarly clustered into three areas of development. Although not all students described hopes to develop in all three areas prior to their involvement in the program, all youth leaders reported development in each of these three areas at the end of their year in the RISE program. Interestingly, most youth identified social and skill development as an important goal for their involvement, but only two reported a desire to develop their self-concepts and confidence. Although social development could be thought of as a subtheme to skill development, it was categorized as a separate theme for two reasons. First, although RISE Reps described gains in social skills, which might overlap with their discussion of general skill development, they also described gains in social capital (i.e., number of friends), and

social equity (i.e., engaging with peers from different social groups). As such, the social development theme is broader than just social skill development. Second, upon analysis of the interviews, it became apparent that relationships were central to the youths' development as leaders. As such, having a separate theme specifically related to social development best described the experiences of the youth.

Skill development. Youth described development in a number of skills. This area of development was related to youths' conceptualization of leadership as <u>*sharing knowledge*</u>. All of the youth reported increased public speaking abilities, which allowed them to share their knowledge broadly; a skill they also noted to be important in the conceptualization of leadership.

> How to control a room cuz when we did the workshops kids were like, we're doing grade eights so they are talking, talking, talking. We had to know how to get the control and get them to listen to you and that's basically what we had to do for all the jobs and make them, the students, listen to us.   (Ashley)

Youth leaders also demonstrated application of the knowledge and skills they learned through the RISE training in their own lives, with specific ability to intervene in bullying situations and advocate for themselves and for their peers. In this way, youths were taking <u>*initiative.*</u>

> RISE taught me that you shouldn't keep quiet and tolerate bullying all the time cause if you do the problem might escalate so it's better to stand up and stop it.

> You have to stand up when you need to and you have to speak up when you need to.   (Michael)

Social development. Through their involvement in the RISE program, youth leaders reported improvements in a number of areas related to social skills. Again, this

development aligned with youths' conceptualizations of leadership, which is a person who possesses *social skills* and can *respect* differences of opinions. It also was related to youths' conceptualization of *the "we" in leadership.* For example, many youths noted that, following involvement in the program, they were more comfortable interacting with peers they were unfamiliar with.

> It let me know I was a lot more capable of just talking to people, being a lot more social. Nothing to really worry about like not going anywhere or not knowing anybody. (Justin)

Youth also noted improvements in their social skills, including being kinder and more inclusive in their interactions with peers.

> I learned not every person in this world deserves rudeness cause I have been exposed to rudeness for about 13 years of my life so when I came here, I was a little bit rude, it came naturally but now I've changed. (Michael)

Last, many youth revealed that they had greatly increased their social network and were friends with individuals they did not interact with prior to RISE. These friendships were with people both in the RISE group, and in the student population more generally.

> I can relate to more different kinds of people and not stick with a certain kind of group of people. So, I feel better that I do have those, these new skills; that I have more diverse personal, I have more variety in my life. (Devra)

Self development. Through their involvement in the RISE program, youth leaders identified improvements in their own character. These traits included feeling stronger, happier, and more confident.

> I became more confident about myself that I am capable of doing stuff, really impossible stuff. (Kevin)

Further, youths described feeling proud to be involved in this group and feeling

accomplished, knowing they were capable of conducting workshops and becoming youth

leaders. They began to feel like _role models._ For example, Danielle described the impact

of being more involved in her school through the RISE program.

> People actually recognize me. Because before like, my other friend, she's
> more out there and I was just known as the girl who's always with her. But
> now I actually have a name for myself I'm just not, basically in her shadow.
> I'm my own person now.   (Danielle)

Mechanisms for leadership development

During exit interviews, youths described their experiences in the program and

discussed which program components were most important for creating the changes they

described in themselves. Five program components were described by the RISE Reps as

most significantly contributing to their development as leaders. Figure 1 depicts youths'

reports of which mechanisms they ascribe to specific areas of development, through their

involvement in RISE.

	Area of Development		
Mechanism	Skill	Self	Social
Training			
Opportunities to Lead			
Meaningful Involvement			
Group Dynamic			
Caring Adult			

Figure 1. Mechanisms associated with areas of development in a youth leadership program.

Youth leaders explained that the intensive *Training* that they underwent at the beginning of the program specifically allowed them to develop skills. They described the impact of the training on improvement to their general leadership skills, presentation skills, communication skills, and knowledge about an important topic. The training, itself, was not associated with other areas of leadership development.

> I think training is the key thing. I think it's the training cause it allows people to know where they're at and like get taught new things   (Sarah)

Having *Opportunities to Lead* and demonstrate their abilities was noted as an integral mechanism to the youths' development. Youths specifically highlighted the positive experience of conducting workshops, and noted that this was the catalyst for skill development, as they noticed the changes in their communication and presentation skills.

> The RISE workshop allowed me to, to gain my, to enhance my communication skills   (Michael)

Having *Opportunities to Lead* also promoted <u>self-development</u>. Specifically, youths

expressed that these opportunities made them feel good about themselves because they

were making a difference in others' lives. They also noted feeling more confident, patient,

and capable.

> I felt really good. Cuz I made a difference in their life…
> Cuz when I'm doing the workshops you have to be patient. You have to be
> patient with the kids like, "okay, can you guys bring the noise down a bit
> please?" You have to know how to approach them with a patient and honest
> way.   (Ashley)

Youth also described the importance of caring about the program's goals and

objectives on the outcomes they experienced. It was their connection to the program's

goals that allowed youth to feel engaged in the program and feel like they were making a

difference. Because they cared about what they were doing, they felt proud of their

contributions and had a stronger sense of self. Thus, this *Meaningful involvement*

impacted the youths' <u>self-development.</u>

> I wanted to get involved because RISE because I wanted to see that change
> and I wanted to be that change…I know that it only takes a little bit of people
> to get involved for something, for a big movement to happen and I knew
> RISE could've been that start for me   (Sarah)

Along with their identification as a group and their sense of influence being

through the group as a whole, youth also ascribed changes in themselves to the *Group*

dynamic. Specifically, youth leaders highlighted that the group impacted their <u>self-</u>

<u>development</u>, by creating a sense of belonging, following the lead of other group

members to become more involved, and improving character traits like patience, caring,

initiative and respect.

> I developed myself through RISE, through talking to people, through discussion, through workshops, sessions, and through meeting new people.
>
> (Kevin)

Youths also noted that the *Group dynamic* fostered social development, as it increased their peer network and provided opportunities for them to socialize with peers in their school whom they never would have chosen to engage with prior.

> I found new friends and learned not every person in this world deserves rudeness.   (Michael)

Lastly, all of the youth described how having a caring adult as their leader impacted their development in all three areas. They described this adult as a confidant, a teacher, a friend, and a maternal figure. They noted that they could access her for support whenever they needed it and they always felt as though she was there for them. They also contrasted her interactions with them to those of other adults, noting that she was respectful and treated them as capable human beings; an experience they described as uncommon with the other adult figures in their lives. The youth explained that because of the respect she bestowed on them, they respected her in return. This bidirectional respect resulted in a productive group of youths who wanted to participate, and who wanted to emulate the qualities of their role model.

> She really has a way of connecting with the youth…she can take that role and say like "Honestly you guys, this way is not really good; you know think about doing it this way" and everybody respects her so everyone is gonna listen to her, you know what I mean? …When meanwhile, there's some teachers that try to play the authority role and they have no respect for us and they're trying to tell us what to do so we're not gonna listen to them. [But with Caring Adult] it's that like equilibrium of respect. (Sarah)

The youth leaders ascribed <u>skill development</u> to what they learned from their

Caring Adult. They described improved problem solving skills, which resulted from

learning different problem solving strategies with their adult leader.

> I tell her stuff about how this person got me mad or whatever she lets me
> know that it's good that you didn't do anything back because it could get
> escalated and if it escalated then I could have got myself into trouble so. If I
> just sit there and ignore them they're going to get tired of what they're doing
> and they're just going to go away so I might as well just save myself the
> trouble and just ignore them.   (Ashley)

Youths also reported <u>social development</u> as a result of teachings from their *Caring Adult.*

Youth reported that feeling respected by an adult encouraged them to respect others, and

promote that respect throughout their school.

> Well that makes me feel like I should see respect like being passed on like all
> around school like you know what I mean? If [Caring Adult] can do it to me,
> and I can do it to her, then everybody can do it to each other.   (Sarah)

Finally, youth leaders described self-development through their interactions with their

adult leader. Her respect for them, along with her empowering and supportive style,

provided space for youths to make positive changes in themselves.

> [Caring Adult]'s not someone who'd say, "okay, go make your bed, go do
> this" but was supportive, "okay, well maybe this is how you deal with the
> situation." And [caring adult] kind of guided us, gave us direction, something
> to work towards…[caring adult] didn't punish us, but when we did something
> good rewarded us...I can see the changes in some of the kids who were like
> more active in doing pranks and stuff like that. Some of those kids I've seen
> them calm down and I see how they are with [caring adult]. They respect
> [caring adult]. So when [caring adult] asks them to do something they do it or
> when she needs help they'll offer to help. And I've seen that kind of change.
>   (Devra)

Deductive case analysis

In the following section, I have provided portraits of each of the seven RISE Reps whose interviews served as the data for the above inductive cross-case thematic analysis. Using the framework provided by the themes generated from the inductive analysis, I describe each participant's conceptualization of leadership throughout the RISE program (see Figure 2 for a summary), and the leadership-related development each experiences through involvement in the RISE program. Overall, this analysis serves to provide a description of the RISE Reps' individual experiences with leadership and leadership development through their involvement in the program.

	Sharing Knowledge	Taking Initiative	Role Model	Social Skills	Respect	The "We" in leadership
Michael						
Sarah						
Ashley						
Devra						
Kevin						
Danielle						
Justin						

Conceptualization prior to involvement

Conceptualization mentioned both prior to and following involvement

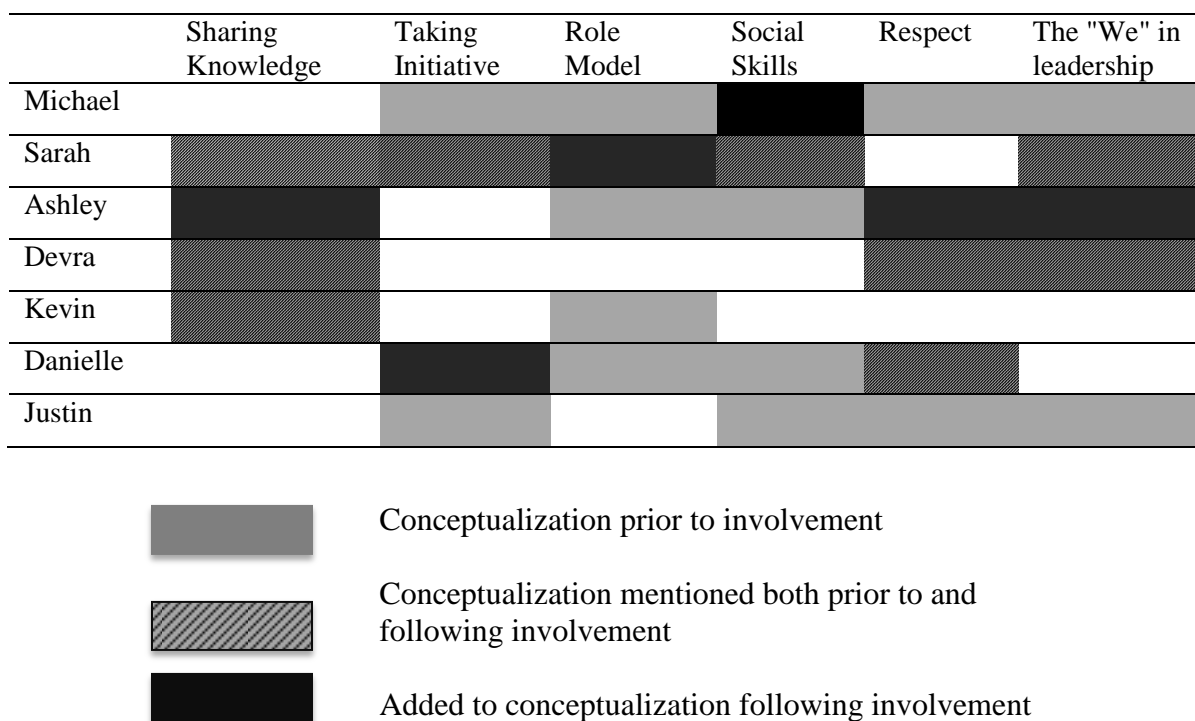Added to conceptualization following involvement

Figure 2. Youth leaders' conceptualizations of leadership through involvement in the RISE program.

Michael, age 16. Michael disclosed a long history of being bullied and reported bullying others in return. This experience motivated his desire to participate in RISE, as he hoped to intervene with those who bully so others would not be victimized as he had been. Michael was not involved in any other extra-curricular activities and spent much of his time alone. When asked at his entry interview, Michael indicated that he did not consider himself a leader. He noted that leaders lead a team to make decisions cooperatively and he sees himself more as part of the team, as opposed to being the leader. Although Michael did not expand on his conceptualization of leadership during his exit interview, he noted significant leadership-related development. Michael noted that through the training he received in RISE, he gained knowledge about bullying and strategies for intervening with individuals who bully (*skill development*).

> RISE taught me that you shouldn't keep quiet and tolerate bullying all the time cause if you do the problem might escalate so it's better to stand up and stop it and it was nice to see that I'm not the only one who suffered from bullying, there are many others.

The knowledge and strategies he developed resulted in Michael feeling stronger and being more assertive (*self development*). When asked about the highlight of his year, Michael said, "the highlight of the year was when I learned from RISE how to stand up for myself". Through having the opportunity to lead, Michael reported gaining stronger communication and presentation skills. The group dynamic in RISE and having the support of a caring adult provided Michael with a broader social network and ability to develop friendships network (*social development*). He explained that "the most important part of the program is I got to know new people". He recognized the importance of

having positive peer relationships for supports. Table 4 describes the themes that Michael

discussed during his interviews before and after his involvement in the RISE program.

Table 4.

Deductive thematic description of Michael's experience in the RISE program.

	Entry Interview	Exit Interview
Conceptualization of Leadership		
Sharing knowledge		
Taking initiative	X	
Role model	X	
Social skills		X
Respect	X	
The "We" in leadership	X	
Leadership-related Development		
Skill development		X
Social development	X	X
Self development		X
Mechanisms of Development*		
Training		X
Opportunities to lead		X
Meaningful involvement		
Caring adult		X
Group dynamic		X

*Note. Mechanisms of the development were only described during exit interviews.

Sarah, age 17. Having a younger sibling who had been bullied at school

motivated Sarah to join the RISE program in hopes of learning ways she might be able to

help. Although Sarah spends time playing on sports teams outside of school, she finds it

difficult to balance all the activities with her schoolwork and responsibilities at home.

When asked prior to program involvement whether she sees herself as a leader, she

indicated that she does believe she is a leader, but will step back if she feels

uncomfortable. She expressed concerns about presenting to younger students, explaining

that she feels nervous standing in front of crowds. Following her year of involvement in RISE, Sarah noted that the most important part of the program for her was the training, which taught her new skills like public speaking; and the workshops, which allowed her to apply her new skills (*skill development*). When asked her opinion about the most important part of the RISE program, Sarah said,

> I think training is the key thing. I think it's a double standard. I think it's the training cause it allows people to know where they're at and get taught new things. And then the workshops allow you to put forth what you learned and teach it to other people.

She reflected that before the program, she would passively observe violence in her school. After her RISE experience, she felt as if she had the ability to stop it and people would listen to her. She noted engaging in different behaviors herself, including becoming friends with peers she had previously excluded, saying, "I see myself trying to put forth energy to try to talk to people" (*social development*). Sarah reflected that this behavior was modeled from observing the RISE staff (the caring adult) respect all students. In turn, she believed she became a role model for others, by leading by example, saying "I'm not gonna just not talk to someone because a lot of people don't talk to them. I'm gonna talk to them if I want to." For Sarah, having a caring adult to emulate leadership was critical to her development. Through her involvement in RISE, Sarah felt inspired by her ability to impact others through her anti-violence messages and behaviors (*self development*). This experience has inspired Sarah's desire to open a community centre for youth where she could further influence others in a positive way. Table 5 describes the themes that Sarah discussed during her interviews before and after her involvement in the RISE program.

Table 5.

Deductive thematic description of Sarah's experience in the RISE program.

	Entry Interview	Exit Interview
Conceptualization of Leadership		
Sharing knowledge	X	
Taking initiative	X	
Role model		X
Social skills	X	
Respect		
The "We" in leadership	X	
Leadership-related Development		
Skill development	X	X
Social development	X	X
Self development		X
Mechanisms of Development*		
Training		X
Opportunities to lead		X
Meaningful involvement		X
Caring adult		X
Group dynamic		

*Note. Mechanisms of the development were only described during exit interviews.

Ashley, age 14. Having not been involved in extra-curricular activities prior to RISE, Ashley felt inspired to become involved in this program to learn new skills and make her school a better place. She was also motivated by the ability to attain her required community service hours. Despite little extra-curricular involvement, Ashley self-identified as a leader, who tried to set a positive example for her friends and family by being a role model and staying out of "drama".

> I don't get myself into any drama or anything and I try to make sure that my close friends and family don't get involved in anything. Like, set an example basically.

Through her involvement in RISE, Ashley expressed feeling "enlightened" by knowledge regarding peer violence, saying that "RISE is a really good program because it taught people about violence and basically enlightened us on things we didn't really know about". She also reported gaining leadership skills, such as the ability to control a room (*skill development*). The workshops allowed her to demonstrate her new skills of controlling a room and created in her a sense of accomplishment because she felt as though she was making a difference in the lives of the program's recipients (*self development*).

> When we did the workshops, kids were talking, talking, talking. We had to know how to get the control and get them to listen to you...I felt really good. Cuz I made a difference in their life…I'm happy that I could be the one that changed their views on violence and stuff.

Ashley also noted that the most important part of the program for her was meeting the other RISE Reps. The group's structure provided a "safety net" where she could learn to share opinions and understand others' perspectives (*social development*).

> At the beginning of RISE we give each other a cue card and then you wrote down what you want from RISE, like no putdowns, no bullying, and what we wanted out of RISE. And every time you're in the RISE room, you have to look at the safety net and follow those rules. So I learned how to control myself by looking at the safety net and that just stuck on me to control myself in and out of the RISE room.

As a Grade 10 student, Ashley indicated a desire to maintain involvement in RISE and hoped to increase students' awareness of the program. Ashley confidently stated that, "RISE is our future". Table 6 describes the themes that Sarah discussed during her interviews before and after her involvement in the RISE program.

Table 6.

Deductive thematic description of Ashley's experience in the RISE program.

	Entry Interview	Exit Interview
Conceptualization of Leadership		
Sharing knowledge		X
Taking initiative		X
Role model	X	
Social skills	X	X
Respect		X
The "We" in leadership		X
Leadership-related Development		
Skill development		X
Social development	X	X
Self development		X
Mechanisms of Development*		
Training		
Opportunities to lead		
Meaningful involvement		X
Caring adult		X
Group dynamic		X

*Note. Mechanisms of the development were only described during exit interviews.

Devra, age 17. Devra was motivated to join the RISE program so she could utilize her leadership abilities and get credit for her leadership course. Devra has a long history of involvement in her school's extra-curricular activities, including being on sports teams and student committees. She self-identified as a leader, and noted that a teacher in Grade 6 recognized her potential and pushed her to get involved in school activities. Although Devra was motivated to join RISE to get credit for a leadership course, after her involvement, she noted that the program was more than she ever expected.

> Actually getting into RISE I found that it was a lot more than what I expected. I though it would just be like all of the other campaigning programs, like the anti-bullying program I joined in grade nine. Like you just work on the assembly and then you do the assembly and then it's a relief to kind of get it off your chest. But like RISE was so fun to come to, everyday that we had the meetings…it was something that people wanted to do…it was really a powerful experience. It's something that I would definitely remember forever.

She explained that RISE brought together different kinds of people, which led to the development of new friendships with people she had never interacted with previously (*social development*). She explained that through the knowledge she gained during training, she realized that some of her interactions with peers could be considered perpetrating bullying and this prompted her to change. She noted that now, she was more open and accepting of others and their opinions. Devra expressed that many changes she noted in herself were a result of the positive influence of the RISE staff member (*caring adult*). Devra, who was involved in many activities, explained that RISE taught her to be grounded and to be selective in choosing extra-curricular activities that were meaningful to her (*self development*).

> [Before RISE] I was definitely outspoken. I was doing everything and I was trying to be involved with everything. I wasn't as laid back…I kind of didn't have the groundedness that RISE provided. It's something that's constant that I can come back to. There's actually substance to it.

For Devra, who has demonstrated strong leadership throughout her school years, participating in the RISE group taught her that part of being a leader is knowing when and how to take a step back and let others take the lead (*skill development*).

I've kind of had to learn to step back and let other people work as well, not just me. Like if there's something I didn't agree with, I can talk about it but I can't change everything for the group when it's a group thing.

Table 7 describes the themes that Devra discussed during her interviews before and after her involvement in the RISE program.

Table 7.

Deductive thematic description of Devra's experience in the RISE program.

	Entry Interview	Exit Interview
Conceptualization of Leadership		
Sharing knowledge	X	X
Taking initiative		
Role model		
Social skills		
Respect	X	X
The "We" in leadership	X	X
Leadership-related Development		
Skill development		X
Social development	X	X
Self development	X	X
Mechanisms of Development*		
Training		
Opportunities to lead		X
Meaningful involvement		
Caring adult		X
Group dynamic		X

*Note. Mechanisms of the development were only described during exit interviews.

Kevin, age 16. As a recent immigrant, this was Kevin's first year at this school. He was interested in RISE's overall program goals, and joined hoping to increase awareness about bullying in the school and gain satisfaction from making a difference. Kevin, who was not involved in any extra-curricular activities, self-identified as a leader, noting that back home he was someone who peers follow and look up to. He noted that

prior to immigrating to Canada, he was part of a gang and was involved in peer-targeted

violence.

> I was a bully. Cause the people who used to bully others, I used to protect
> them, and I used to protect them by bullying the people who bullied them.

Following his involvement in the program, Kevin recognized numerous changes in

himself, including an improved ability to handle difficult situations (*skill development*).

Specifically, Kevin noted that he understands it is not effective to "bully the bullies". He

also indicated that the biggest change in himself was the increased knowledge and

understanding he attained.

> I should say my brain I developed. I had conceptions, which got modified
> after I was in RISE.

He also learned to engage positively with peers and initiate friendships (*social

development*). Kevin reported that through talking to other RISE Reps, participating in

training sessions, and conducting some of the workshops, he feels more confident about

himself and competent in his abilities (*self development*).

> I developed myself through RISE, through talking to people, through
> discussion, through workshop sessions, and through meeting new people.

Most importantly for Kevin, he made new friends in this new environment.

> I got to know about things…how to talk with people and how to basically
> make friend with people, different types of people.

Table 8 describes the themes that Kevin discussed during his interviews before and after

his involvement in the RISE program.

Table 8.

Deductive thematic description of Kevin's experience in the RISE program.

	Entry Interview	Exit Interview
Conceptualization of Leadership		
Sharing knowledge	X	X
Taking initiative		
Role model	X	
Social skills		
Respect		
The "We" in leadership		
Leadership-related Development		
Skill development	X	X
Social development		X
Self development	X	X
Mechanisms of Development*		
Training		
Opportunities to lead		
Meaningful involvement		
Caring adult		
Group dynamic		X

*Note. Mechanisms of the development were only described during exit interviews.

Danielle, age 15. Danielle joined RISE because she wanted to make a change in her school with regards to youth violence. Danielle hoped that through her involvement in RISE, she would gain leadership skills. Prior to involvement, she described herself as shy and someone who was not outgoing. When asked what she believed was the hardest part of being a peer leader, Danielle responded, "probably building relationships with the people…being able to talk to them." Danielle believed she could be a leader in RISE because, as a victim of bullying, she had experienced some of the problems her peers have experienced. After her involvement in RISE, Danielle expressed that she had

overcome her shyness and was able to talk to peers openly and more comfortably (*social development)*. She ascribed this change to the group dynamic.

> It sort of helped me get passed my shyness a little bit and talk about my feelings and stuff, and learn how to handle situations better. And how to talk to people more.

Danielle also explained that through her involvement in RISE, she learned how to appropriately engage with peers and start a conversation. She reported improved problem solving skills, which she learned from the caring adult in the group. She indicated that from this caring adult, she learned "to think about possible outcomes that could happen." Danielle expressed pride in herself and her new confidence in her ability to present in front of the RISE group (*skill development and self development)*. She took initiative in assisting with a RISE activity. Danielle's experience with taking this initiative expanded her understanding of what it means to be a leader. Again, the group dynamic was critical for Danielle's development.

> Something that I did that I'd never do [before RISE], we were planning on an assembly and they wanted to write a speech. I've had really good ideas but I didn't want to say any…so I saw that nobody was really taking the initiative to do it, so I did it in then I read it out loud and everyone really liked it so I felt really good that they liked my speech…I learned not always to hid your talents.

Overall, Danielle noted that the biggest change in herself was that she is now involved in her school, knows more people, and feels like her own person.

> I got to know people in my school more and be more a part of the school instead of just coming to school, do my work, go home….People actually recognize me .

Table 9 describes the themes that Danielle discussed during her interviews before and

after her involvement in the RISE program.

Table 9.

Deductive thematic description of Danielle's experience in the RISE program.

	Entry Interview	Exit Interview
Conceptualization of Leadership		
Sharing knowledge		
Taking initiative		X
Role model	X	
Social skills	X	
Respect	X	X
The "We" in leadership		
Leadership-related Development		
Skill development	X	X
Social development	X	X
Self development		X
Mechanisms of Development*		
Training		
Opportunities to lead		X
Meaningful involvement		
Caring adult		
Group dynamic		

*Note. Mechanisms of the development were only described during exit interviews.

Justin, age 16. Following a friend's lead, Justin joined RISE to stand up against

youth violence and to strengthen his application to University. He expressed a desire to

gain public speaking skills. When asked whether he would describe himself as a leader,

Justin said, "No". He explained that he tends to sit back and let others take charge. He

also explained that he tends to dislike group work and prefers for things to go his way. He

noted this juxtaposition, explaining that as much as he is not a leader, he has a difficult

time with things not going his way.

> I like putting forth my ideas first cuz I kind like things to go my way…Cuz I like my ideas being heard. I just don't really like sitting back and doing other people's things as much as I might not necessarily be the leader.

Although he was not an active member in the group, Justin participated in all training sessions and attended some of the workshops. From his involvement in the training and workshops (opportunities to lead), Justin reported improvements in his public speaking skills (*skill development*). From being part of the RISE group, Justin also expressed an increased interest in socializing (*social development*), and an improved ability to express his opinions openly (*self development*).

> [Last year], I was a lot more timid, that's for sure. Like really, really shy. I used to express my opinion a lot but I think with RISE I do more. A lot more often. I feel more free to do so.

Overall, Justin expressed that the biggest change for him was related to his improved public speaking skills, which he believes will help him in many ways in the future. This change was specifically associated with having the opportunity to lead during workshops. When asked what strengths or skills he developed since his involvement in RISE, Justin said,

> Nothing really stands out besides public speaking. Nothing comes to mind other than that. But I think it will help me do better. And even later on in life with my job, because I want to become a lawyer, so I think it will be a skill I can hopefully use.

Table 10 describes the themes that Justin discussed during his interviews before and after his involvement in the RISE program.

Table 10.

Deductive thematic description of Justin's experience in the RISE program.

	Entry Interview	Exit Interview
Conceptualization of Leadership		
Sharing knowledge		
Taking initiative	X	
Role model		
Social skills	X	
Respect		
The "We" in leadership	X	
Leadership-related Development		
Skill development	X	X
Social development		X
Self development		X
Mechanisms of Development*		
Training		
Opportunities to lead		X
Meaningful involvement		
Caring adult		
Group dynamic		

*Note. Mechanisms of the development were only described during exit interviews.

Summary. Together, these case-based analyses highlight that each of the RISE

Rep's experience in this youth engagement program was unique. However, some

common elements arose through these analyses. First, many of the youths were motivated

to join RISE because of a desire to improve their school and larger social system, where

they or a loved one had been victims of peer violence. Second, the notion of strong

social relationships with peers and with the caring adult in the group was a central theme

in each of these analyses. Last, expanded conceptualizations of leadership and the

development that each RISE Rep noted in themselves were related to the experiences

they had in the RISE program; especially when these experiences were novel. Additions

to their conceptualizations of leadership occurred when the youth had an experience in the program that provided an opportunity to engage as a leader in a new way. Despite these commonalities, this case-based analysis also highlights that the youths' experiences of leadership are individual, developmental, and contextual. Youth had differing motivations to participate in the program, along with different prior experiences in extracurricular activities. Their development was related to and built upon their own personal experiences both before and after their involvement in the RISE program.

Template analysis.

Exit interviews for the additional nine RISE Reps were deductively coded using a flexible template approach to validate the themes associated with leadership development described above. This analysis yielded consistent findings with the above thematic analysis, suggesting that the model validly explains the conceptualizations, process and mechanisms for youth leadership development, as described by youth leaders. Table 11 presents example quotations and the number of participants in this second sample of youth leaders who reported each theme of leadership development previously identified.

Table 11.

Validation of themes from original model of leadership (n = number of participants identifying the theme in template analysis).

Domain	Quote	*n*
Conceptualizations of Leadership		
Sharing Knowledge	It felt nice to like take that information that I learned and bring it to like the younger kids and like have them actually like remember it and stuff like that. (Michelle)	6
Taking Initiative	I said I stood up for my friend like when she was sort of being bullied. Like, I would even stand up for people that I don't know (Brianne)	7
Role Model	I'm like maybe I could change people that are younger then me, so they don't have to go through what I went through (Shawn)	3
Social skills	Just being able to listen and get along with people. Even if you're not necessarily, don't really talk to them that much, still being able to hold a conversation with someone is important (Fiona)	4
Respect	You can't really judge people by their actions. You should try mostly to help them and like try to see like how it might hurt them or it might, how it might hurt someone else. But not judge them, just try to help them (Laura)	3
The "We" in Leadership	Everybody knows about RISE in the school so when you say you're from RISE you know automatically people are just like okay well you know I don't wanna be doing anything violent around this guy or anything like that (Josh)	2

Areas of Development

Skill Development	I did presentations on my own I didn't swell up like a balloon I didn't turn red I didn't stutter so it was good (Monique)	9
Social Development	I guess I could sort of uh, be more social with people that are not generally the same as me… That's sort of like made me more comfortable talking with them, socializing with them (Ryan)	9
Self Development	I just think that this says so much about me like that I'm like I'm not that like stubborn little girl that everyone once knew like I'm actually willing to change (Michelle)	9

Mechanisms of Development

Training	I think the training sessions were really, really important, cause not only did I like learn stuff I thought would be important to me, but I guess for other people too, cause like whenever I see some situations like, like sort like self-consciously, the whole R.I.S.E. thing comes up (Ryan)	5
Opportunities to Lead	I don't know you felt important, like people were listening. It's like you were actually getting something done and you had just been talking about doing this and getting doing that for so long and then actually going out and doing it, was awesome (Fiona)	6
Meaningful Involvement	When I heard that we would be going to elementary schools and talking to them about trying to prevent bullying and relationship problems and stuff, I figured it'd be good if I could go out there and you know help change something (Josh)	5
Caring Adult	[Caring Adult] I guess, she's just been very positive she's always helped. She like listens and she actually wants to listen unlike whereas some teachers would just listen just cause they have to listen. She actually listens and comments positively (Andrea)	9
Group Dynamic	Well coping with things, obviously learning to talk to people about things cause I know that when certain people have problems in our RISE group we usually stopped what we were doing and like talked about it. So, that was good. I think it really helped other people too. So it kind of made me realize that talking does help (Fiona)	9

In coding these additional nine interviews using a flexible template approach, one new theme emerged that was not originally captured by the thematic analysis. Specifically, a new theme under the domain "Area of Leadership-related Development" was discovered through this part of the analysis. Coded as "School and Community Engagement", this theme described youths' reported changes in their engagement in school, including improved academic performance and greater involvement in their school community through participation in other extra-curricular activities. Youths who described this development explained that meaningful involvement, group dynamics, opportunities to lead, and caring adult facilitated this development.

> Everyone's like [name]... you're so out there you tell people about everything that's going on you're not that shy anymore you're involved with clubs you did this and that (Monique)

> I don't get suspended anymore.
> I'm more motivated to help people in my community (Josh)

As a result of this emergent theme, the original seven interviews were explored again to investigate whether this theme had been overlooked in the original analysis. Upon exploration and re-coding, it became clear that this theme was, in fact, an Area of Development mentioned by two of the RISE Reps. Specifically, Devra's reflection on her experience in RISE was that:

> Some of the kids, they weren't necessarily bad kids but they never really did their part to kind of help better the school, and after being in RISE they kind of felt like they have the power to do stuff.

Similarly, Danielle expressed that the biggest change in herself since beginning RISE was her involvement in school.

> I got to…be more a part of the school instead of just coming to school, do my work, go home. I actually got involved with events and stuff…I got more involved instead of just being like, another person just in the shadows in school.

Another consideration that arose from the template method was an expansion of the theme, "Meaningful Involvement". Specifically, because RISE was a cause they believed in that provided meaningful extracurricular involvement in a supportive environment, these youths expressed that it prevented them from engaging in negative activities in the community. RISE provided a place to go that was safe and engaging, keeping them off the streets during their free time. For example, Laura specifically highlighted the value of meaningful involvement in the lives of the youth leaders.

> RISE, they're actually keeping a lot of kids off the street and into a place where, that they can actually learn and be with friends and enjoy themselves. Like, you… they're in after school and a lot of kids are there until like five o'clock. And what else could they have been doing if like…even one of the girls said, "yeah, I would have been like at the mall, might have been causing trouble, but I was here so." I think that was the most successful part of RISE.

Another RISE Rep described how he engaged other youth in the RISE program through this notion of meaningful involvement.

> Where I'm from, my neighbourhood is pretty violent so I figure that if I could learn a couple of tricks here and there, it might work in my neighbourhood and it actually did. I started talking to younger kids, guys who are coming to [this school] next year and I told them about the RISE program. I'm like, "you know you guys should join. It's pretty cool you…we just chill after school. Sometimes we just jam, sometimes we have food and stuff,". So I tried to get their attention and I guess it worked and most of them want to join when they come here next year. I guess that's one of the main reasons why I decided to join to help out in my community.   (Josh)

A model of youth leadership

A final model of leadership development that considers all themes related to youths' conceptualization, leadership development, and mechanisms for this development is shown in Figure 3. This model highlights the thematic connections between the conceptualizations of youth leadership and the skills that youth develop through involvement in a youth engagement program. Youths identified four skills that they developed through their involvement in RISE. First, they described skill development – an area that most resembled direct leadership skills. Youths' conceptualizations of leadership involved having skills to be a leader, including someone who shares knowledge and takes initiative to make a change. Second, RISE Reps noted significant social development through their involvement in the program. Social skills were also noted as important components of being a leader as leaders respect others' opinions and ideas and work well within a group (the "we" in leadership). Next, youths identified significant self-development, where they expressed improved confidence, competence, and character development. Feeling strong in oneself is necessary to be a role model, which was an important component of their conceptualization of leadership, as well. Lastly, youths described development in their engagement with their school and community.

The model also depicts the mechanisms that are associated with each of these areas of development. Specifically, a caring adult appears to be the most critical mechanism for development, as youth associated this relationship with development across all four domains. The group dynamics of the youth leaders impacted youths' social

development, self-development, and engagement in school and community. Having an opportunity to apply their skills and lead resulted in skill and social development, as well as school and community engagement. Meaningful involvement resulted in self-development and school and community engagement. Lastly, the training itself was only associated with skill development, suggesting that other programmatic features more specifically related to the youth engagement framework are critical to broader leadership development.
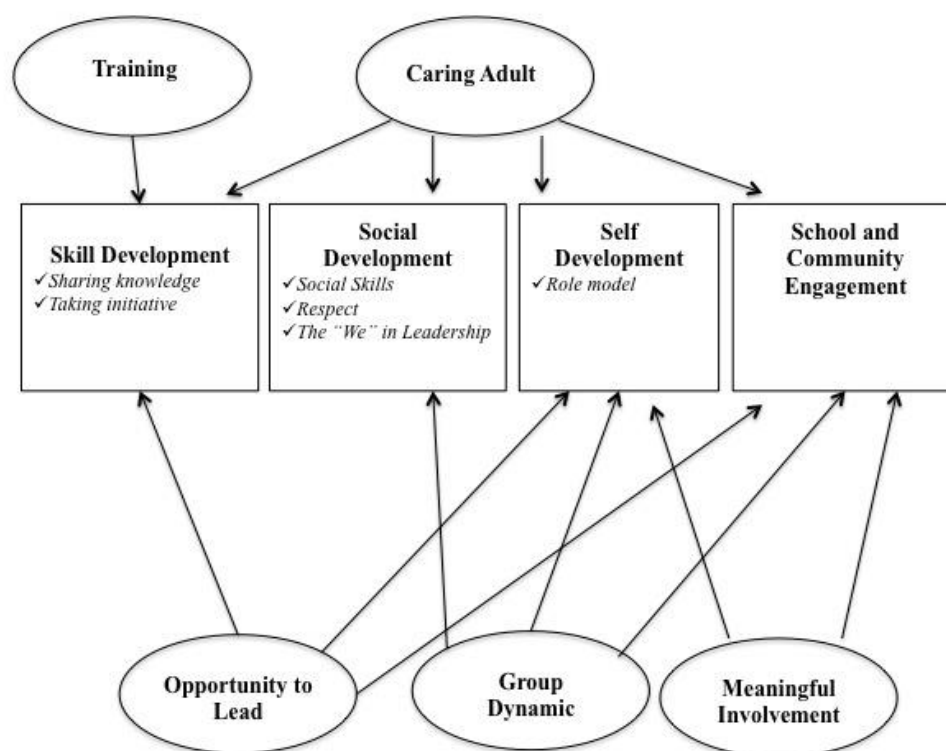
Figure 3. A model of youth leadership development.

Discussion

To date, very limited research has explored youth leadership through the voices of the youth themselves. Thus, the goal of the present dissertation was to give voice to youths' understanding and development of leadership experiences in a youth leadership program. Through the use of mixed-method, qualitative procedures, a valid model of youth leadership was developed that describes youths' conceptualizations of what youth leadership is and how it develops. Although not all youth conceptualized leadership the same way, all revealed development in their leadership-related skills, social network, and self-characteristics. Further, the present study suggests that youth engagement is a promising model for promoting the development of youth leaders. Youth associated the reported changes in themselves to experiences related to the implementation of core youth engagement principles. Finally, this study was unique in using multiple qualitative procedures to provide rich and complete descriptions of participants' experiences, which supported the development of a valid and refined model of youth leadership.

A youth-centered conceptualization of youth leadership

Youth understood leadership as sharing knowledge, taking initiative, being a role model, having social skills, being respectful, and as a group process. These youth-centered conceptualizations of youth leadership are in-line with previous research (Conner & Strobel, 2007; Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; Roach et al., 1999; Wu et al., 2014) Of note, not all RISE Reps conceptualized leadership in the same way, but their responses reflected variable combinations of these five themes. Importantly, changes in youths' conceptualizations after their involvement in the RISE program were a result of

having a different leadership experience while in the program. For example, in the deductive case analysis, some youth described changes in their ability to share knowledge, take initiative, and be a role model because of the experiences they had as RISE Reps. Consistent with previous research (Komives et al., 2006), providing youth with opportunities to engage in leadership not only develops their leadership abilities, but also leads to an enhanced understanding of leadership. Although no concise consensus existed for one definition of leadership, these qualities help define how youth themselves understand being a leader and provide a base for future research and programs to explore. Further, although researchers have called for a unified definition or understanding of youth leadership (Conner & Strobel, 2007; Klau, 2006; Kress, 2004), being more flexible in our conceptualization could support youth with various strengths and might engage youth who possess differing opinions of what leadership is.

The conceptualizations that the youths described also highlight a difference between activity-based leadership, or "doing leadership" (Hollander, 1986) and identity-based leadership, or "being a leader" (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). Specifically, the RISE youth leaders conceptualized doing leadership as sharing knowledge, engaging socially with peers, and taking initiative to do something. Youths also conceptualized leadership as identity-based, such that they understood that being a leader means being a role model and someone who is respectful of others. In this way, leadership is not just an accumulation of skills but also becomes a part of their identity. Given that adolescence is a critical period for identity formation (Erikson, 1968; Klimstra, Hale, Raaijmakers, Branje, Meeus, 2010; Marcia, 1994), it is clear that when given the opportunity to

develop leadership skills, youth are also likely to integrate the idea of leadership into their developing identities.

Van Linden and Fertman (1998) also explain that leaders, who they refer to as transformational, share responsibilities as they recognize the power of groups. In the present study, youths' conceptualization of leadership was rooted in this idea. Youths often described components and characteristics of leadership by using "we" language. This finding is consistent with theoretical shifts from individual leadership models to those that consider leadership as a collective capacity, focusing on a team-based approach (Hernex-Broome & Hughes, 2004). Moreover, this finding supports previous research describing the central importance and influence of peers in the lives of adolescents (Brown & Larson, 2009; Maccoby, 1998). In the present study, RISE Reps further highlighted the importance of the "we" by noting that the group dynamics in RISE were a critical mechanism to their development of social competencies. Youths also expressed that the group's significance was not just in making new friends, but in providing a "laboratory" to develop and practice new leadership skills, through challenging and supporting each other. Therefore, efforts to create leaders should occur in group contexts and should include development in skills required to work effectively in groups, such as collaboration, communication, and interpersonal skills (Conner & Strobel, 2007; Kahn et al., 2009).

Development experienced through involvement in a youth leadership program

As a result of their involvement in the RISE program, youths described leadership-related development in four main areas: skills, social, self, and school and

community engagement. This development is consistent with MacNeil's (2006) discussion of youth leadership development, which includes growth in psychosocial, cognitive, behavioural, and socio-political domains. More specifically, in the present study, youth leaders identified development in skills necessary for sharing knowledge. They reported improved social skills, ability to respect others' opinions, and a sense that leadership occurs through their RISE group. They reported self-development in their ability to take initiative to make an impact and they had a sense that they were role models in their schools. Lastly, the RISE Reps reported development in their engagement in their school and community, such that they described greater involvement in their school and community through participation in other extra-curricular activities. Similar areas of development have been reported in previous research on youth leadership programs (Bloomberg, et al., 2003; Hindes et al., 2008; Karnes & Bean, 1995; Lloyd, 2001). Importantly, however, previous research has described similar growth for adolescents involved in extracurricular activities in general, such as arts, sports, and faith-based programming, including development of initiative, growth in emotional competency, formation of varied and new peer connections, and development of social skills (Benson et al., 2006; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003). What these general extracurricular programs do not provide, however, is opportunities to practice leadership skills, like sharing knowledge or being a role model. So, at the very least, involvement in extracurricular activities in general facilitates positive development for youth. When developing leadership is the main goal, however, programming rooted in a youth engagement framework may be most effective.

Theoretical Implications

   Youth engagement as a method for developing leaders. Although the youth

engagement literature has always endorsed and promoted youth leadership by involving

youth in leadership roles, few studies have empirically recognized the importance of

youth engagement in the greater process of leadership development. The present study

suggests that youth engagement is indeed a promising program model for developing

youth leaders. The RISE program provided training that enabled youth to develop skills,

provided emotional support through a relationship with a caring adult, and provided an

opportunity for youths to impact their schools and communities by becoming anti-

violence ambassadors. In this way, the RISE youths had the opportunity to be leaders.

Youths specifically identified five components of the youth engagement program that

facilitated their development as leaders. RISE Reps reported that their training, being

supported by a caring adult, having the opportunity to lead, being involved meaningfully,

and having a positive group dynamic all promoted their development.

   Central to the youth engagement framework is the developmental stage of

adolescence, when youth are seeking independence, but continue to require support from

adults. In these programs, caring adult leaders provide structure, while assuming the role

of mentor to the youth and facilitating opportunities for the youth to feel empowered to

be leaders themselves (Eccles et al., 2003; Larson, et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn,

2003; Stoneman, 2002). The caring adult provided opportunities for the youths to lead,

and allowed for their involvement to be meaningful (by allowing youth to independently

make decisions about programming); two other mechanisms that youth endorse as

facilitating their development. Similarly, she was also noted to play a critical role in creating a positive group atmosphere. In the present study, the RISE Reps strongly valued their caring adult -- highlighting the role she played in all areas of their development.

Importantly, the voices of the youth leaders highlight some key characteristics that are critical for the caring adult to possess. This adult was facilitative in her approach, as opposed to didactic. She was not prescriptive of requirements and rules, nor was she a taskmaster forcing youths to do things they were not interested in doing. She was viewed as a role model who allowed youth to take the reigns of their program, allowing them to be decision-makers. She served as a model leader for the youths to emulate. In the context of leadership, this caring adult emulated an authentic leader, or an individual that "encourages openness in sharing information needed to make decisions while accepting followers' inputs (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 423)". She also possessed qualities of a transformational leader, or someone who inspires individuals to work toward group goals through enhancing their morals and values (Avolio et al., 2009; Bass, 1985). Little research has investigated the impact of different personal characteristics of this caring adult on program recipients, especially those within youth engagement programs. Kathrin Walker (2011) noted that caring adults who move across different roles (e.g. mentor, friend, parent figure, teacher) are described by youth as most effective. Future research should investigate how characteristics of the caring adult in youth engagement programs foster development, specifically with regards to leadership. For example, are youth emulating the leadership style of their caring adult and does this effect their understanding of what leadership entails?

According to youth engagement theory, in order for youth to feel engaged, the activities must be relevant and important to their lives, and activities must be youth-driven (Pancer et al., 2002; Pereira, 2007; Rose-Krasnor, 2009; Stoneman, 2002). In the RISE program, RISE Reps were given ownership of the program, developing and delivering program goals, ideas, and activities that were driven by them. to their peers and younger students. Not surprisingly, given this opportunity to engage in meaningful projects created by them, youth built confidence, and developed individual and interpersonal skills, including leadership abilities (Larson & Angus, 2011; Pearce & Larson, 2006). Together, these characteristics are related to youth developing a sense of agency (Benson et al., 2006), recognizing that they have control over their own development. These characteristics are also related to a sense of empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995), understanding that they can have an impact on the contexts within which they live. In the present study, as youths developed this sense of agency and felt empowered to make a difference, they also reported more engagement in their school and communities. This engagement provided a stage for the RISE youths to demonstrate leadership. Researchers should continue to investigate the role of youth engagement programs on the development of agency and empowerment, and how these are related to youth leadership.

Adding the voice of youth to leadership theory. In addition to contributions to youth engagement theory, the results of the present study have important implications for our understanding of leadership more broadly. First, findings of this dissertation support a relational perspective of leadership, suggesting that leadership does not reside in one

person, but in the relationship between and among individuals (Haber, 2011). In this way, leadership is a relational construct, and not just a personal characteristic or quality.

Relationships are not just important amongst the leaders, but also between the leaders and followers. The "followship" literature has suggested the notion of prototypicality; the idea that followers are more drawn to leaders who possess traits or characteristics of individual or groups they want to belong to, join, or emulate. This concept is similar to the idea of being a role model, a conceptualization espoused by the RISE Reps. Moreover, in accordance with the above discussion about the caring adult, youth seemed to emulate and work toward developing the leadership qualities she possessed. As such, prototypicality seems to be an important aspect in the relationship between the leader and the follower.

Last, the field of leadership has generally moved away from a trait and contextually-based definition of leadership to one that is more dynamic (Burns, 2003; Fertman & Van Linden, 1999). Leaders can possess different traits and skills, and can lead in many different ways. Although leaders influence others socially and ethically, the means in which they do this can vary (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999). This dynamic perspective of leadership suggests that leaders may lead in some situations, perhaps ones they feel passionate or care about, but not necessarily in others. Findings from the present study support this dynamic perspective of leadership, where RISE Reps conceptualized leadership differently, and all led as RISE Reps in their own ways. This flexible approach allows researchers and practitioners to support leadership development in a

diverse group of individuals, so that there is engagement and investment across a wide range of sectors, communities, and institutions.

The value of a longitudinal, mixed-method, qualitative approach

One of the strengths of the present study was the use of mixed qualitative methods to understand youth leadership development. While most quantitative research employs different statistical methods to answer different questions, the concept of using different qualitative methods in the same study is novel. In this study, each methodology provided a unique perspective and understanding that supported the creation of this youth leadership model. Specifically, the thematic analysis was the base for the current study and provided the structure (i.e., themes) for the development of a model of youth leadership development. Next, the deductive case analysis was used to elaborate on the differences observed in leadership development for each participant. Lastly, the template analysis validated the themes that arose from the thematic analysis through replication, and strengthened the overall findings of the present study. The synthesis of these methodologies resulted in a clear, valid, and reliable description and understanding of youth leadership development.

Another methodological strength of the current study was the use of two time points for data collection, allowing for a succinct and meaningful understanding of leadership development. Specifically, I was able to see how youths described themselves as leaders prior to their involvement in the program, and what changes they described following involvement. Having both time points allowed for deeper exploration of the process of development, and not just a retrospective account of the youths' self-

descriptions. This was particularly advantageous in the deductive case analysis. Although longitudinal studies are not only common, but preferred, in quantitative developmental research, the application of these methodologies is limited in qualitative methods. Those that have collected qualitative data at multiple times have provided more detailed descriptions of the process of change or growth, leading to richer theoretical development (e.g., Larson & Angus, 2011; Larson & Brown, 2007; Simmons, Russell, & Thompson, 2014). Researchers should be encouraged to employ this longitudinal qualitative methodology to attain richer descriptions regarding developmental processes and not just individual accounts at a given point in time.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations to the present study should be considered. First, although typical of qualitative research, the small sample size limits the generalizability of the present findings. Further to this, it is possible that there was a selection bias, in that RISE Reps most engaged in the program were the ones who chose to participate in the interviews. Despite efforts to address this selection-bias with program developers, it is still possible that the most marginalized and least engaged youth were also those who chose not to participate in the research. As a result of these limitations, an investigation of individual factors that might impact the development of leadership was not possible. For example, previous leadership experiences or involvement in extracurricular activities might be related to which skills youth develop and to the mechanisms they describe as most impactful. In the present study, involvement in the RISE program resulted in development in all areas, regardless of whether or not youth had been involved in

extracurricular activities or leadership roles previously. Although this could be related to the unique program features of the youth engagement model, it could also be related to an inability to detect individual differences due to the small number of youth leaders. With more research on youth engagement as a model for leadership development, this distinction will become clearer.

Second, consistent with discovery research methodology, the concept of "leadership" was not directly asked about in the exit interviews (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). This interview method allowed for youth to spontaneously reflect upon their experiences in this leadership-based program without any imposed suggestions regarding types of changes that might be expected by the program or the researchers conducting the interview. However, it is also possible that this might have resulted in under-reporting of leadership development than would have been described if participants were directly asked about it. For example, youth were prompted to discuss leadership conceptualization in entry interviews, as they were asked whether or not they believed they were leaders and why. In the exit interviews, however, there was no direct mention of leadership by interviewers. If a similar question had been asked during exit interviews, perhaps youths would have provided alternate or elaborated conceptualizations of leadership. Alongside this, youths' responses may have been subject to social desirability biases. During entry interviews, youth may have felt as though there descriptions of themselves and hopes to gain through their involvement in the program would impact their likelihood of being chosen to participate in the program in the future. In the exit interviews, youth may have presented the RISE program and their experiences as RISE

leaders in an overly positive light.

The moderate to low intercoder reliability should also be noted here. In the present dissertation, intercoder agreement was used as the index of intercoder reliability. Despite being the most widely used method to determine intercoder reliability (Hitze, 2005; Watkins & Pacheco, 2000), it may not appropriately reflect the true nature of agreement in the coding as it does not account for agreement between coders that might occur by chance (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002). It may have been more desirable to use a more sophisticated index, such as Cohen's Kappa (Bakerman, 2000; Cohen, 1960), or intraclass correlation (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979) in calculating intercoder agreement. Of note, low intercoder reliability is not uncommon in qualitative research because data collection is unstructured. This makes obtaining similar results across individuals and time unlikely (Guest et al., 2012). Further, although the quantitative evaluation of reliability was not as high as desired in the present dissertation, the findings are notably valid, legitimate and credible. All coding was done by more than one coder, so that nothing was missed and all misinterpretations were clarified. Further, in discussion of these results with others in this field, the findings present face validity; the findings intuitively make sense to the construct of youth leadership, in the context of youth engagement. Lastly, validity was demonstrated through the application of my model of leadership to a new data set. However, now that a youth-driven model of youth leadership is established, implementation of this model to future studies will improve validity and ultimately reliability. Also, although it was not possible to discuss this model of youth

leadership with the youth who provided the data, future researchers should work to share developing theories with the youth themselves in order to gather their input.

Finally, since very little prior research has investigated youth's understanding of leadership and its development, the concepts and themes discussed here were exploratory. Much more work is needed to evaluate and validate this model of youth leadership development in different settings, and with different youth. Observation methods might provide an interesting lens into the process of group dynamics and leadership development. Continued longitudinal work, assessing leadership qualities and processes more frequently during the program, and in follow-up assessments after program involvement would contribute to understanding of how leadership develops. It would also be interesting to investigate individual differences in leadership development, such as differences associated with gender or level of academic achievement. Further, other potential mediators to leadership development should be explored, like school climate, different adult leadership styles, or community factors.

Conclusion

By analyzing interviews of youths engaged as leaders in a school-based anti-violence program, I developed a youth-driven model of youth leadership. Specifically, youth conceptualized leadership as both activity-based (i.e., doing leadership) and identity-based (i.e., being a leader). For youth, leadership was seen as a collective capacity - one that relies on a team-based approach. Results also demonstrated that youth engagement is a promising framework for developing youth leaders. More specifically, providing youth with meaningful opportunities to lead under the support of a caring adult

led to development in the youths' leadership skills, social network, self-concept, and engagement in their school and community.

In today's economically, politically, and socially challenging world, youth have the most at stake because they represent the future. As such, involving them in addressing the problems of society ensures that they are meaningfully engaged in the well-being of their communities. Although youth are leaders in many ways, others frequently consider them the leaders of tomorrow. Recognizing their potential and fostering their leadership development is critical for their successful transition into becoming independent and thriving adults. To date, researchers and practitioners have taken a top-down approach to understanding youth leadership and have rarely explored this concept through the voices of the youth themselves. This study provides a model of youth leadership development created from the voices of youth leaders. More broadly, this study supports a strengths-based model of youth development and engagement to promote positive outcomes and reduce negative ones. In support of the United Nations' (2006) call for engaging young people in the decisions about their future, this model serves as a guideline for practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers for understanding how youth conceptualize leadership and how their development into leaders can be supported. Moreover, this study exemplifies how understanding issues that affect youth without asking youth themselves is presumptive. Not only do youth have insights and skills to offer within their schools and communities to address meaningful issues, but they also have important contributions to make to the development of theory and practice.

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Appendix A

Definitions of leadership in leadership education programs (adapted from Klau, 2006)

	Definitions of Leadership	Description
1.	Civic leadership	Interest in and engagement with issues of broad public interest
2.	Charismatic leadership	Ability to influence peers through enthusiasm, extroversion, or creativity
3.	Leadership as formal authority	Attainment of a position of formal authority in a business or organization
4.	Relational group leadership	Ability to manage interpersonal dynamics for the good of the group
5.	Service leadership	Commitment to engaging in activities dedicated to helping underserved or needy populations
6.	"Great individual" leadership	Recognition of one or two individuals as "the best"
7.	Intellectual leadership	Ability to reason clearly and persuasively in a manner that influences others
8.	Moral and spiritual leadership	Commitment to the cause of promoting social justice

Appendix B

Chi-square values comparing youth who only participated in exit interviews those who
participated in both entry and exit interviews on demographic variables

Variable	Chi-square	DF	p
Gender	.15	1	.70
Grade	.97	2	.62
Born in Canada	.79	1	.38
Ethnicity	3.95	5	.56

Appendix C

RISE Rep Entry Interview

1. Why are you interested in the RISE project?

2. What do you hope to gain from your involvement in the RISE project?

3. What are some things that you are really good at?

4. What skills or areas would you like to build on?

5. Do you see yourself as a leader? Why or Why not?

6. What do you think would be the hardest part of you being a peer leader at RISE?

7. How involved are you in school activities, sports, and clubs?

8. What do you do when you are not in school?

9. What types of things are you interested in or passionate about?

10. Do you think there is a problem with youth violence today? Do you have any personal experience with violence?

11. What do you think a healthy relationship looks like or should not look like?

12. Can you describe the current atmosphere of your school?

13. Do you believe you can make a difference in your school or community?

14. Where do you see yourself in three to five years?

15. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about yourself?

Appendix D

RISE REP Exit Interview

1. Tell me a bit about your experience with the RISE program. (Probes: Why did you get involved? What did you hope to get out of it? What were the most important parts of the program for you?).

2. How would you have described yourself before you got involved with RISE?

3. How would you describe yourself now?

4. Tell me about an event or situation since your involvement in RISE that was especially good or positive for you. (Probe: Why was this event important, what does it say about who you are or were?).

5. Tell me about an event or situation since your involvement in RISE that was especially difficult or challenging for you. (Probe: What happened, when, who was involved, what did you think and feel? Why was this event important, what does it say about who you are or were?).

6. Was there an event or situation during your involvement with RISE which led to a change in how you saw yourself? Please tell me about it. (Probe: What happened, who, when, what did you think and feel? Why was this event important, what does it say about who you are or were?).

7. Do you feel that you have developed any new strengths or skills since your involvement in RISE? What are some examples?

8. Have your relationships with other people changed? If so, how?
    a. With friends or other students?
    b. With family?
    c. With other adults (e.g., teachers, RISE staff)?

9. Have your beliefs or attitudes changed since beginning with RISE? If so, in what way?

10. Tell me a bit about your future goals. Are these different than before? In what way?

11. What's the biggest change for you since beginning with RISE?

12. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your involvement with RISE?

Appendix E

Coding Manual

- Code one document (interview) at a time
- Read each coded meaning unit and decide which domain it is related to: (1) conceptualizations of leadership, (2) leadership development, or (3) mechanism of leadership
- Code the unit as the theme it represents from the list below
- If a coded meaning unit does not fit into one of the three domains, code it as "OTHER"
- If a coded meaning unit relates to a domain, but not to one of the themes from below, code it as "Domain OTHER". For example, if you believe a meaning unit is related to a definition of leadership, but does not relate to one of the 6 themes subsumed within conceptualization of leadership, code that meaning unit as "Conceptualization of Leadership OTHER"

Conceptualizations of Leadership - describes what youth identify as the characteristics, attributes, and abilities that are required to be a leader

1. Group Leadership	-Code anything where youth describe leadership experiences in the program with "we" language. -For example, "we were able to make a change" or "we ran a workshop and students listened to us".
2. Sharing Knowledge	-Code anything where youth describe making an impact by sharing/providing knowledge or teaching something that they learned in the RISE program. -This could have occurred during a workshop or in interaction with peers. -This might be commonly described as presentation skills.
3. Respect	-Code instances where youth note that they need to respect others opinions. -Code also discussion around everyone having the opportunity to share their opinion and be respected.
4. Initiative	-Code comments from youth noting that they took initiative to do something or takes charge. -This also includes doing something they feel "makes a difference". -For example, putting their thoughts forward, or taking the lead on an activity

| 5. Role Model | -Code comments related to youth relating to peers through shared experiences, or through relating to peers because they are or have been in the same place.
-Code descriptions of situations where other youth leaders act as role models (i.e., other youth follow or emulate their actions). |
| 6. Social interaction | -Code comments about abilities to engage with people, or having a broad social network. |

<u>Leadership Development</u> - refers to youths' descriptions of how they changed through their experience in this youth leadership program

1. Skill development	-Code any mention of youth developing leadership-related skills through the RISE program. -For example, youth might mention presentation or public speaking skills. They also might describe increased knowledge about an important topic. -Another common skill they describe is problem solving skills or peer mediation skills. Importantly, this is reserved for when youth support their peers in solving social problems, not when youth leaders are engaging differently in their own social interactions.
2. Social development	-Code any mention of youth developing a greater social network or improved social skills. -For example, youth might speak about feeling more comfortable talking to people, socializing with people they never would have before, or engaging more positively with peers. Youth might also mention being more respectful of others' opinions.
3. Self development	-Code comments about improvement to themselves. -For example, youth might speak of being more confident, happier, stronger, etc.

Mechanisms of Leadership - refers to program components that youth ascribe as responsible for creating the changes they experience from involvement in the program

1. Caring Adult	-Code any mention of the impact Bronwyn (the RISE staff) had on the youth's development. -This needs to be a specific example of how she impacted them. Do not include broad mention of her, but specific examples of what she did that impacted the group or the youth themselves.
2. Group Dynamic	-Code comments about the impact of the group dynamic on the youth. -Youth might discuss how the format of RISE allowed them to learn to interact with others, or how the group was a safe space for them to be themselves. -Again, it is important to code mentions of the group or nature of the group having an actual impact on the youth's development.
3. Meaningful Involvement	-Code mentions of the youth referring to the RISE program as interesting, something they enjoyed spending time doing, or as something they care personally about.
4. Opportunities to Lead	-Code comments from youth about the impact of leading workshops or other leadership opportunities provided through the program. This theme is meant to describe how having the opportunity to use their leadership skills facilitates their development.
5. Training	-Code mention of the impact of their training experience. Youth need to specifically mention their training as the mechanism for their development. -This could be the specific training sessions, or the RISE program in general (e.g., during meetings).