

**Learner-centred pedagogies:
Implementing Inquiry-Based and Collaborative
Strategies in a football nursery.**

Leona Vella

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ABSTRACT

Leona Vella

Learner-centred pedagogies: Implementing Inquiry-Based and Collaborative strategies in a Football nursery

Learner-centred pedagogies are constantly being promoted with present day educators, as the benefits that arise from using such pedagogies with learners are numerous. Malta's National Curriculum Framework encourages the use of learner-centred pedagogies in the classroom; however, the case is not the same when it comes to the promotion of such pedagogies in the local football sporting context. This study inquires whether learner-centred pedagogies have positive effects on player learning, whether it is challenging to use such methods with players of different ability and how to maximise learning when simultaneously using inquiry-based (IBL) and collaborative learning (CL) strategies. In this study, session plans were specifically created in order to help with such an inquiry. Observations and journal entries were used to gather data from one football nursery through an action research approach applied by the practitioner-researcher. The data revolved around analysing the reactions and behaviours of twelve players towards the implementation of IBL and CL techniques, as well as the practitioner-researcher's ongoing reflective analysis and decision-making processes. The results indicate that learner-centred pedagogies did have positive effects on player learning and were not always challenging to use with players of different abilities. Moreover, this study also proposes multiple ways of simultaneously using IBL and CL to maximise individual learning.

Master in Teaching and Learning in Physical Education

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LEARNER-CENTRED ENVIRONMENT

ATHLETE-CENTRED LEARNING

INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Dedications

***To my loving family who gave me their endless support throughout
the process of becoming an educator.***

'The family is a link to our past and a bridge to our future.' –

Alex Haley

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Choosing the research topic

Reading for a Master's Degree in teaching and learning at the University of Malta, after completing a Bachelor's Degree in Sport and Physical activity, inevitably exposed me to the world of learner-centred pedagogies. These learner-centred pedagogies were highlighted throughout both courses as valuable approaches in educating the 21st-century learner. Moreover, when reading and learning about these pedagogies, I found myself wanting to learn how to implement these methods in practice, as learner-centred pedagogies are proven to maximise learning in different kinds of learners (Otara, Uworwabeyeh, Nzabairwa & Kayiseng, 2019). Furthermore, I have always believed in the importance of having the individual at the centre of learning, and how learners should be given the opportunity to show what they know or have learnt through practice. While there are multiple methods that fall within the learner-centred spectrum, I decided to focus on inquiry-based and collaborative learning strategies for this study because these are the two techniques I mostly resonate with.

Research about the implementation of inquiry-based and collaborative learner-centred techniques in the local football scene is scarce. However, Malta's education system strives towards the implementation of these approaches in its schools (NCF, 2012). Thus, one might note that using these kinds of methods in coaching should also be encouraged, as this would allow the creation of a link between what is taught in schools and what is taught in clubs, especially at youth level. By having these institutions educating on the same wavelength, children can continue to grow and refine valuable skills when moving between one institution and another, while still learning in a learner-centred environment.

It is important to note that this study will focus on pedagogical areas which are both found in sport and physical education. Throughout the study, teacher, educator, and coach on one hand, and student, player and learner on the other will be used interchangeably. This is because both the physical education teacher as well as the sport-specific coach working with young children must take pedagogical decisions and take on the role of educators.

1.2 Aims of the Study

The main aims of this study focus on gaining a deeper understanding of the implementation of inquiry-based and collaborative learning techniques from an educator's point of view. Through an educator's perspective, the study will uncover answers related to the following research questions:

- Do learner-centred pedagogies positively influence learning in players?
- Is it challenging to use these learner-centred pedagogies with players of different learning abilities?
- How can these learner-centred pedagogies (inquiry-based and collaborative work) be utilised mutually to maximise player learning?

A qualitative approach was used to analyse the creation and implementation of nine session plans that promoted inquiry-based and collaborative activities. The reactions and reception towards learner-centred pedagogies of twelve players were observed during these nine training sessions. Moreover, notes were taken down during the observations as well as after the observations were completed to make sure that notes were written close to the occurrence of the event so as to not forget any details. Data was also gathered before and after the implementation of the sessions through

eighteen written entries that compiled a reflective journal. This data depicts the practitioner-researcher's perspective on how inquiry-based and collaborative methods were implemented, utilised, and how they impacted players' learning.

1.3 Structure of the Dissertation

The forthcoming chapter presents a review of available literature that is relevant to the research topic. Such a chapter will delve into topics such as the creation of a learner-centred environment; the definition, establishment, advantages, and disadvantages for both inquiry-based and collaborative learning; and the use of these pedagogies in the local scene. Chapter 3 will then explain the research methods and tools utilised in this study while providing reasons behind the selection of such tools. The data analysis used to extract the findings and results from the collected data will also be presented. Such findings and a discussion revolving around the main findings can be found in Chapter 4. Here, themes that directly relate to the research questions are discussed and presented. These themes focus mainly on whether learner-centred pedagogies positively influence player learning; whether it is challenging to use such pedagogies with a mixed-ability group; and how to incorporate the use of these two methods to maximise learning. The fifth and final chapter will summarise the findings, state the limitations encountered, provide recommendations for further studies, and conclude this dissertation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In an ever-changing society, the teaching and learning process needs to constantly adapt and evolve to cater for the needs of learners and society alike. Throughout the years, teaching and learning has increasingly shifted towards promoting the learner at the focal point of the learning zone; which, in turn, initiated the creation and development of learner-centred teaching methods. According to Prince and Felder (2006), learner-centred approaches involve various strategies such as problem-solving approaches, self-regulated learning, cooperative methods and discovery/inquiry-based learning. These methods have proven to positively influence how individuals intake and process knowledge (Lee, Chen & Wang, 2017). Additionally, the variety of methods within the learner-centred spectrum allows educators to successfully attempt catering for the learning needs of all learners (Altinyelken, 2011). While learner-centred approaches have been positively taken on board by educators and learners, there are still some challenges in implementing these kinds of approaches in practice (McCabe & O' Connor, 2014). This chapter will focus on literature dealing with such aspects, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how the creation and implementation of a learner-centred environment impact both educators and learners in diverse ways.

2.2 Creating a learner-centred learning environment.

2.2.1 Philosophical background of learner-centred learning

Learner-centred learning revolves around the idea that learners dynamically construct new knowledge with the use of skills, such as problem-solving, decision-making, leadership, and communication amongst others (MINEDUC, 2015 as cited by Otara et al., 2019). These are skills that could be utilised in their day-to-day lives (Lee et al., 2017; Hardman, Abd-Kadir & Smith, 2008). Learner-centred pedagogies allow educators to accommodate learners of different abilities (Lee et al., 2017). Furthermore, this approach also helps learners categorise knowledge (Thompson, Licklider & Jungst, 2005) in a way that they understand, regardless of what their preferred learning style might be (Lee et al., 2017). This concept materialised from constructivism, which initially was created to counter educator-centred instruction which was increasingly being criticised (Moate & Cox, 2015).

Constructivism is a philosophy that encapsulates multiple approaches (Amineh & Asl, 2015). Constructivist learning is based on the idea that learners seek to actively learn new things while linking such new learning with prior learning and past knowledge (Mayer, 2004). In this way, learners have a base to build upon, allowing them to combine new knowledge with what was previously learned (Zain, Rasidi & Abidin, 2012). This pedagogy is said to originate from Socrates, who insisted that the construction of knowledge through questioning, discussion and interpretation between learner and educator should be part of the process in creating an enriching learning environment (Hilav, 1990 as cited by Amineh & Asl, 2015). According to John Dewey (1997 as cited by Altinyelken, 2010), education should be based on the cognitive, socio-emotional and moral growth of the person, and these should shape

the individual's experience of learning (Atinyelken, 2011). Dewey (1910, as cited by Agius, 2016) claims that learners have to be involved in the learning process by creating new information themselves. His arguments were grounded on focusing on the entity's learning through discovery, questioning and problem-solving techniques (Dewey, 1997 as cited by Altinyelken, 2010).

Stemming from the constructivist theory are the works of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Both these theorists believed in Dewey's work and implemented it within their philosophies of teaching which looked at constructivism from a cognitive and social point of view. Jean Piaget's focus was mainly on the individuality of the learner and how the individual creates knowledge (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Piaget (1953 as cited by Powell & Kalina, 2009) builds his theory on the fundamentals of constructivism in which learners construct knowledge, knowledge that is created through personal experience and hands-on practice. Piaget's cognitive development theory focuses on the concept of schemas, the creation of a framework and mental map which learners create to organise new information (Piaget 1983 as cited by Lefa, 2014). Schemas are defined by Lefa (2014) as different categories of knowledge that allow learners to learn and acquire knowledge from experiences. Children can start understanding and interpreting the world around them with the development of schemas in the brain. Without these schemas, learners would not register or learn from any new experiences (Simatwa, 2010). In order to continue to develop these schemas, schemas need to be able to adapt and change accordingly. Piaget's suggestion to make schema adaptation possible is through the processes of assimilation and accommodation (Amineh & Asl, 2015). The assimilation process works towards inputting new information into an existing schema, where, for example, different kinds of dog breeds would be seen as similar information that can be put into

the same schematic structure. However, new information can arise which can disrupt the current schema and cause disequilibrium. Disequilibrium is when a learner has a cognitive conflict in which would contrast with information already present in the current schema (Lefa, 2014). This problem is solved by accommodation, which is when learners have to adapt their already existing schemas to input information that is slightly different or does not make sense to the current schema (Simatwa, 2010). These two notions allow individuals to welcome new knowledge into their schemas and adapt the way they are thinking, in order to fit the new information into the already present schemas (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Piaget states that the processes of assimilation, accommodations and schemas are different for each child as the development of these processes depends on the ability and learning rate of the child. This suggests that learner-centred pedagogies are needed so to provide the opportunity to tailor learning to the child's needs. Learner-centred approaches, therefore, provide the educator with improved opportunities to facilitate learning at the rate of the child, as opposed to using a 'one size fits all' model of teaching (Powell & Kalina, 2009).

While Piaget focuses on the connection between the immediate environment and the individual, Vygotsky highlights the importance of society and the individual's learning (Altinyelken, 2011). Lev Vygotsky believed that knowledge is created through socialisation and collaboration (Powell & Kalina, 2009). According to Vygotsky, children must first interact with society to start focusing on their cognitive development. Only after having their first taste of socialising within the community, do people actually start showing that they are cognitively developing and growing (Amineh & Asl, 2015). Within this theory, there is an emphasis on the fact that people are more likely to learn in a cooperative scenario when compared to learning

individually. Vygotsky (1962 as cited by Powell & Kalina) believes that individuals working in a group would have a deeper understanding due to the concept of scaffolding. When learning happens collaboratively each individual contributes towards the construction of knowledge, and every individual progresses from one level to the next through the co-construction of knowledge. Such learning has a huge impact on learners; on how they learn and what they learn (Powell & Kalina, 2009).

Both cognitive and social constructivism promote active involvement in learning through personal engagement in the construction of knowledge; thus ensuring a deep understanding by the learner (Schweisfurth, 2011). These theories make use of inquiry-based techniques to promote learning, which is one of the main methods to be used for this study. The difference between Piaget's and Vygotsky's learning theories lies with the individual. While Piaget promotes the notion of learning primarily being an individual process, Vygotsky emphasises that without socialising, that same individual would never be able to learn (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Additionally, Vygotsky's theory also holds collaboration at the centre of the learning process, which is another important approach that will be investigated in this study. The concepts proposed and recommended by Piaget and Vygotsky, link well to John Dewey's foundation on what learner-centred learning is (Gauthier, Dembele, Bossonnette & Richard, 2004). These three theorists formed the pillars of what the world knows of constructivism and learning-centred pedagogies today.

2.2.2 Shifting from teacher-centred approach to learner-centred approach

Educators' experience, whether social, cultural or historical, has a large impact on their preference of pedagogical practice (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2015). A teacher-centred instruction denotes a circumstance in which the educator has complete control of what the learner is learning (Otara et al., 2019). This traditional method is persistently used universally despite being constantly criticised (Altinyelken, 2011). As a matter of fact, several researchers recommend moving away from this approach, specifically, Jones (2006), who states that one should move away from approaches that let learners rely heavily on their teachers and disregard the learner's right for autonomy. Additionally, such traditional practices are discouraged as they are ineffective in helping students develop skills that are valuable in everyday society (Gauthier, Dembele, Bossonnette & Richard, 2004). Opposing this is the learner-centred approach, which allows the learners themselves to take control over what they are learning and to process the knowledge taught as they see fit (Souza & Oslin, 2008). When comparing this method to the teacher-centred approach, the latter-centred style is less favoured due to its emphasis on learning through memorisation which only stays with the person for a little while. This approach also completely disregards the possibility of learners being creative in the way they produce knowledge and learn (O'Sullivan, 2004). Jessop and Penney (1998) also state that teacher-centred approaches diminish critical and creative thinking among learners. On the other hand, the learner-centred style allows an in-depth understanding of the content being taught where individuals can put the knowledge learned to practice (Otara et al., 2019). Educators who use this style are implementing a practice-based

learning system where students create and apply the knowledge that they have learned to real-life scenarios.

Currently, there is a shift that educators must go through in order to create and maintain a learner-centred environment. Several researchers have claimed that this shift of changing from one kind of pedagogical practice to another, has increased dynamic demands for educators (Reeves, 2005; Smart, Witt & Scott, 2012). These demands can make the shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred learning rather challenging. Educators are now required to be aware of what learner-centred learning is and have to acquire skills that would allow them to implement learner-centred pedagogical concepts throughout their practice (McCabe & O'Connor, 2014).

To tackle these demands, learner-centred teaching should be introduced during the pre-service phase of an educator's career, where aspiring educators can learn about the benefits and become advocates for learner-centred learning (Mtika & Gates, 2010). Teachers and coaches need to make sure that the lessons and sessions they plan include substantial learner interactions, while also analysing their practice to continuously effectively assist learning (De la Sablonniere, Taylor & Sadykova, 2009).

Apart from the abovementioned challenges, the biggest challenge educators face seems to be related to the shifting of power relations within the group where there is a progressive transfer of responsibility from teacher to learner (McCabe & O'Connor, 2014; Schuweisfurth, 2011). In order to assure that there is an effective and healthy transition of power, Jones, Armour and Potrac (2004) propose that first, the dynamic relationship between educator and learner has to be thoroughly examined and understood. Explaining the imbalance of power between coach and athlete, for example, Cushion and Kitchen (2011) state that capital [knowledge] is distributed

unevenly in a coach-athlete relationship. Coaches have more capital than their players, which creates the hierarchical structure that is seen in coach-centred instruction. This argument is portrayed by several coaches in a study done by Bennett and Fyall (2018). One coach in this study stated that his understanding of the game was far more complex and deep when compared to that of his athletes, due to his experience and knowledge of the sport. This concept might give weight to an educator's decision to totally control the learning process in the learners' best interest. This confirms the notion that teachers and coaches might feel that they have a right and obligation to keep control. Apart from power relations being dictated by knowledge, Kidman, Thorpe, Jones and Lewis (2001) emphasise that the shift from teacher-centred instruction to that of a learner-centred one proved to be difficult for educators with traditional insights and with only minimal knowledge of learner-centred approaches. This is confirmed by Bowles and Dwyer (2020) where during their self-study, coaches found it problematic to uphold an athlete-centred coaching style and were debating on whether to switch back to the traditional model of coaching. Furthermore, educators may feel as if they are 'giving up control' (Alder, 2017, p.64) whenever encouraged to increasingly shift towards learner-centred models.

Anne, one of the researchers in a collaborative self-study states that she had to 'consciously hold back on coach-led feedback' (Bowles & Dwyer, 2020, p.244). By this, she means that it was difficult for her to not provide coach-led feedback in the spirit of giving the players instructions and feedback that were more inquisitive towards learner-centred learning as opposed to coach direction. In her writing, she infers that the term 'conscious' shows that coaches have to question their own beliefs and take time to internalise and implement a new philosophy within their coaching. Furthermore, coaches have to understand that when they are releasing their control

over the players, they are giving players the leeway to work independently. This independence, according to coaches, may result in the loss of control over player behaviour due to the absence of discipline. In Bennet and Fyall's (2019) study, coaches commented on this notion by stating that after affiliating learning-centred methods to their practice, they felt like they could no longer discipline the players as much they used to. Players were now harder to control, which made it more difficult for the coaches to implement their sessions in an appropriate manner. Moreover, Bowles and Dwyer (2020) conclude their study by insisting that in order to create balance in power and control, a trusting relationship must be created between player and coach. By creating a positive relationship between player and coach, coaches can feel more comfortable in transferring power to their athletes and allowing them control over the training session.

As difficult as it may be, educators have to take the first step in creating more learner-centred sessions by taking on the role of a facilitator as opposed to a dictator (Souza & Oslin, 2008). Here, rather than giving out information to learners, educators are instead directing learners to discover knowledge independently (Altinyelken, 2011). Moreover, in a learner-centred environment, athletes and coaches are encouraged to work together in a way that creates a social balance between coach, athletes and peers (Brodie, Lelliott & Davis, 2002).

2.3 Inquiry-based learning (IBL)

2.3.1 Defining IBL

Inquiry-based learning (IBL) is described as being an innovative way of instruction that involves the use of questioning. This allows learners to explore different scenarios

in which they are encouraged to find answers and solutions in a variety of ways. IBL allows learning to occur through the involvement of questioning whether it be done by educator or learner (Maaß & Artigue, 2013). This kind of learning is often associated with sporting situations and as of recently, is being related and used within the classroom when it comes to physical education too (Østergaard, 2016).

The origin of inquiry is correlated to the methods that scientists use when on the verge of a new discovery (Woolnough, 1989). Scientists always start their research with a question, a question that links up with an assumed problem that one must solve. The inquiry process of research allows scientists to ask what needs to be solved, and what methods should be used to solve the question. Moreover, inquiry blurs the line between theory and practice, where they merge together to inform one another to provide constructivist learning (Østergaard, 2018).

Like with other learner-centred pedagogies, the educator takes on the role of facilitator of learning in IBL, where the educator presents a dilemma query and learners must solve the query by investigating, engaging in hands-on experience, discussing and building on prior knowledge (Kahn & O'Rourke, as cited by Rooney, 2012). Apart from facilitating learning, educators should also provide learners with clear guides and objectives of what is being learned, implement scaffolding techniques through clear examples and give constructive feedback whenever needed (Hattie, 2012). Through this method of learning, students acquire what one would describe as *'true'* knowledge, which consists of knowledge that is created by the learners themselves (Grech, 2014). Furthermore, learners are seen as dynamic and active individuals who are ready to analyse and use a variety of skills they are already aware of to continue learning (Swan, 2005). In fact, Hubball and Robertson (2004) explain that athletes are encouraged to take on the responsibility of actively participating during training by

thinking and acting like their coaches, all while learning through practice in-game scenarios. IBL is seen as a successful pedagogical method that allows learners to build on and challenge their prior knowledge deliberately (Witt & Ulmer, 2010).

When exploring IBL methods, one should be aware of the different levels that exist in IBL methodologies. In fact, there is a spectrum of IBL levels that range from fully structured planned questions to open-ended questioning strategies (Grech, 2014). Bonnstetter (1998) talks about a traditional lesson where the teacher controls every aspect to be on one side of the spectrum when describing the different levels and forms of IBL. Here, teachers customise the topic, questions, materials, design and results. According to PRIMAS (2011), this kind of learning is also a way to ‘confirm’ student understanding, where the teacher has full responsibility for what students do and do not understand. Another form of IBL is structured IBL, which consists of the teacher giving the area or topic students are to focus on, as well as suggesting the resources and methods that the students could use to aid in solving the problem. Guided types of IBL also exist. These are similar to the structured version, but, allow the learner more autonomy by only getting the question and resources necessary to solve the problem, leaving the methodology completely up to the student (Agius, 2016). Lastly, there is student-directed and student research IBL, where the bulk of the work is done by the learners and the educators’ job is to facilitate understanding of the topic at hand (Grech, 2014).

2.3.2 Establishing IBL with a group of learners

When implementing IBL with a group of learners, the educator needs to have the capacity to be able to ask questions which will expedite the way that learners learn

(Huball & Robertson, 2004). Teachers and coaches alike have to be trained on how to question and how to use questioning techniques with students before implementing them in practice (Mtika & Gates, 2010). Furthermore, research suggests that educators need to emphasise the objectives to be covered during the learning process to effectively instigate an IBL environment (Kirschner & Sweller 2006).

Initially, when using an IBL approach with a group of learners, one should follow a number of steps to make sure that the implementation of such a methodology is successful. As already stated in a previous section, IBL originates from the scientific method of problem-solving. The preliminary question poses the problem clarification stage where learners have to find various possibilities to answer the question asked (Østergaard, 2016). Next, learners are to articulate any assumptions or hypothesis that directly relate to the original question, bringing about the making a hypothesis stage. It is vital that during this stage, learners are not overpowered by the educator and instead left to their resources while investigating the problem themselves. Learners are then asked to test their theories and hypothesis by putting the assumptions into practice. Learners can then examine and solve the problem at hand with reasoning, which would be followed by the collection and discussion of results (Østergaard, 2018). It is through this process that educators encourage learners to analyse and solve the problem handed to them while also helping them to develop as critical thinkers (Østergaard, 2016).

Educators need to be made aware of the various questioning types that exist in order to challenge their learners. Bloom's (1956) cognitive taxonomy theory helps understand the different high-order questioning styles that exist. These can be used by teachers to tackle different kinds of cognition. Hubball and Robertson (2004) give examples of different kinds of questions that made players reflect on playing patterns

as well as identify and construct future strategies that players can use during a game. There are 6 types of progressions in questioning which range from simple recall of knowledge up to evaluation, where learners are asked questions that allow them to completely reflect on a sporting action by using the previously learned principles of the game (Hubball & Robertson, 2004). Apart from the two extremes, recall is followed by comprehension and application in which the facilitator has to provide examples through questioning and in a realistic context. Furthermore, the last questioning progressions, analysis and synthesis, help learners analyse and predict content in a realistic situation. Here, questioning tactics allow learners to group and summarise content (Bloom, 1956; Hubball & Robertson, 2004).

Establishing IBL methods consists of defining the roles of learning for both educators and learners. This means that both educator and student are given responsibilities throughout the teaching process which define who teaches, who learns and who facilitates (Parr & Edwards, 2004). Educators should be able and willing to move away from instructor-centred teaching, by handing over the responsibility to learners by facilitating learning through ongoing guidance. This should be done by not directly answering the questions on behalf of the learners. Rather, sufficient time needs to be dedicated to learners' thinking (Grech, 2014). Educators should also facilitate further learning by posing further questions to any new learning discoveries made by learners. In this way, the build-up of learning would ultimately lead to the main answer (Suebnuarn & Haddawy, 2006). An educator applying IBL should make sure that they are aiding in the promotion of a positive learning environment in the team, as this is one of the main contributing factors in assuring successful IBL implementation (Hubball & Robertson, 2004). A positive learning environment can be created by having an open-door policy with athletes where the educator is open for proposals by

the group. Additionally, Hubball and Robertson (2004) state that coaches should vary the types of questions used to challenge their athletes' cognitive abilities when it comes to reflection and analysis. Educators should further switch over the role of the inquirer to the learners, by inciting players to create questions and produce knowledgeable discussions in regards to their theories with their teammates (Østergaard, 2016). On the other hand, learners during IBL learning scenarios should take accountability for their learning through actively participating and making an effort to reflect and answer questions. Here, learners have to invigilate their own process of learning and creating knowledge from experience. They are held responsible for how actively they are involved in the learning process and how they are learning (Marters, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2007). Students are encouraged to investigate and come up with their own deductions and assumptions on the topic being tackled (Maaß & Artigue, 2013). Furthermore, learners are to use their skills and what they already know to efficiently tackle a problem given by the educator (Agius, 2016).

2.3.3 The advantages of using IBL

There are numerous skills that learners attain and benefit from when engaging with IBL methods throughout the learning process. Educators expressed that learners' communication, oral and writing skills bettered themselves when using a learner-centred approach (Altinyelken, 2011). Wright, Burrows and MacDonald (2004) comment on how IBL teaches skills such as critical thinking, critical reflection and problem-solving which are needed for the 21st-century individual. Specific skills such as, critical thinking and decision making are extremely important for an athlete, as these abilities are required when critically analysing a situation that occurs during

gameplay and how quickly one can react and adapt to such a situation (Hubball & Robertson, 2004). Baker, Barstack, Clark, Hull, Goodman, Kook and Lang (2008) also mention how IBL allows learners to visualise ideas and trial their internalised hypothesis when investigating for answers. With this methodology of learning, learners are better able to acclimatise what they already know to new and diverse circumstances (PRIMAS, 2011).

Some other advantages that arose from the use of IBL also focused on motivational attributes that promoted learning opportunities. Learners favoured IBL lessons over more traditional settings with Bruder and Prescott (2013) confirming that learners demonstrated greater interest in the former, which in turn, increased motivation. Motivation increased proportionally with the implementation of IBL as this methodology gave the learner the opportunity to apply content learned to their everyday-life experiences (Meyer, Turner & Spencer as cited in Bruder & Prescott, 2013). In fact, the PRIMAS study (2011) emphasises that when relating learning to scenarios that occur in a learner's life, learners tend to better retain the information learned. Additionally, new learning opportunities allowed learners to be more expressive and increased their self-confidence (Altinyelken, 2011). Students taught using the IBL method commented on being more willing to prioritise learning, by putting in more work and effort during the lesson (Gibson & Chase, 2002). Das (2013) also remarked that learners' grades and achievement levels in schooling increased, especially with students that struggle with academic work.

IBL furthermore enhances the possibility of investigating a question within a collaborative learning environment, which shall be discussed later on in this literature review. Students are encouraged to compare and discuss their assumptions with other students during the making a hypothesis stage. Here, learners can create a

conjoined and combined hypothesis that allows them to learn from one another's experience and comments. Learners can also work together to test their theories and give each other opinions on the best way to tackle the problem at hand (Østergaard, 2016). In a study by Hubball and Robertson (2004), coaches used problem-based learning and IBL by introducing 'peer-coaching modules', where players observed and gave feedback to one another and together, critically reflected on ways to improve their techniques when it came to football. IBL also incites discussion that is significant and meaningful between a group of peer-learners, improving their communication skills in collaborative settings (Amaral, Garrison & Klentschy as cited by Bruder & Prescott, 2013).

2.3.4 The setbacks of using IBL

Curriculum content is considered as one of the primary and biggest drawbacks associated with IBL, particularly, the time it takes to teach an exam-oriented curriculum. A local study by Grech (2014) highlights that with most schools being exam-oriented, educators struggle to go over the large amount of content that needs to be covered, while also implementing IBL at the same time (Grech, 2014). Some teachers from Mtika and Gates' (2010) research study even state that teachers preferred using the traditional model for teaching as they argued that IBL methods were perceived as being very slow methods. Furthermore, the teachers noted that they would have never finished the syllabus in time for examinations if they implemented the IBL approach. This was due to the excessive amount of time that IBL activities take to complete. Similarly, coaches feel that with a competitive playoff close by, they were unable to implement an IBL athlete-centred approach or found

difficulty in doing so (Bowles & O'Dwyer, 2020). It is demanding to try and use IBL when the main focus of the session should be on the tactics used to win the game the following day (Light, Evans, Harvey & Hassanin, 2014). This competitive factor was also seen in an extremely competitive education system, in which a student's overall grade would affect what schools they would attend (Altinyelken, 2011).

Apart from the time constraint impacting the coverage of content on time, educators also encountered problems in having enough time to plan for IBL sessions (Sikoyo, 2010) as they did not have enough time within their timetable to do so (Otara et al., 2019). Moreover, there are some institutional factors that educators encountered when implementing IBL. One of these factors is large group sizes, which was recognised as an impeding factor to educators, as they could not use inquiry with a large number of learners at once (Mtika & Gates, 2010). Attempting to use IBL in a large classroom while making sure that every learner understood and participated, was a huge challenge that educators faced (Altinyelken, 2011).

Other than factors that mostly concerned educators, as well as institutions themselves, difficulties were also highlighted from the learners' point of view. Learners have to already have some critical, communication and linguistic skills (Otara et al., 2019) before attempting to learn through IBL methods. Without having these basic skills already in place, students will struggle to understand the content being learned (Burlison, 2007). Additionally, learners might not be prepared for such a change in how they learn and might find the introduction of such an approach to be overwhelming (Walker, 2007 as cited by Agius, 2016). As a matter of fact, many educators reported and realised that their learners were handing over their learner-centred tasks to their parents, as they did not know how to look for the information themselves (Altinyelken, 2011). In situations like these, the educator must take out

time from contact-time to prepare and train learners on how to actively participate in IBL activities (Gillies, Nichols, Burgh & Haynes, 2012). Additionally, there may be some students that would reject IBL because they are used to learning information through traditional teacher-centred settings. These students may feel distraught and find difficulty in adapting to a new system, and this difficulty results in them feeling uncomfortable with student-centred methods (Trautmann, MaKinster & Avery, 2004).

2.4 Collaborative Learning (CL)

2.4.1 Defining CL

Collaborative learning (CL) can have multiple meanings, as it constantly intertwines itself with the definitions of cooperative learning and group work. It is after all based on the notion of cooperative learning through group work. Individuals engage in cooperative learning when they work as a team towards a common educational goal (Panitz, 1997, Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Here, learners within the group are given a task to complete that would eventually allow all the participants to reach the ultimate common goal of the group (Slavin, 2013). Moreover, CL is a combination of different practices that motivate participants to work together by using what they have learned to solve tasks or problems presented to them (Colbeck, Campbell & Bjorklund, 2000). According to Webb, Franke, Ing, Wong, Fernandez, Shin and Turrou (2014), CL requires mutual agreement between all the group members in order to be able to efficiently solve a task, and mutual agreement is reached through discussion and reciprocal learning.

According to Colbeck et al. (2000) group work is considered as a catalyst of active learning within the collaborative spectrum. This entails organising learners into

clusters where individuals are encouraged to equally and mutually take responsibility for their own and the groups' learning while completing the task given by the person in charge in a collaborative manner (Hammar Chiriatic & Forslund Frykedal, 2011). However, there is the tendency that group work sometimes can be defined as simply the act of grouping people together (Lumpe, Haney & Czernjak, 1998). This is not what is intended for this study as this alone is not enough for CL to happen. It is vital to therefore understand the difference between working in a group versus working as a group (Hammar Chiriatic & Forslund Frykedal, 2011). Finally, the aim of CL is how people build and create knowledge together and how these benefit the individuals and not just the group itself (Renkl, 2007).

2.4.2 Establishing CL methods with a group of learners

As previously explained, individuals cannot just be placed in groups without motive. Rather, they have to be given singular roles (Lotan, 2008) as well as a common goal to work and learn together. Interactions between peers will not take place spontaneously without aid just because the individuals are placed in a CL situation (Kreijins, Kirschner & Jochems, 2003). Before implementing CL strategies in the classroom, the educator needs to possess the knowledge and know-how of how to place students and create groups, in order to maximise learning. Unfortunately, several educators lack the knowledge and guidance to arrange a group in a way that is efficient for both the learners and the educator (Gillies & Boyle, 2010). Teachers in Ruys, Keer and Aeltermans' (2012) study felt that they did not know how to use CL or how to group the students for efficient learning. Erkens, Bodemer and Hoppe

(2016) suggest that educators need to analyse their learners and use this information to group them accordingly.

Researchers suggest that the best way to group learners is to group them in a heterogeneous manner, to ensure that there is an even allocation of diverse learners and opinions within the same peer group (Erkens et al., 2016). Dillenbourg and Jermann (2007) in fact, differentiate between two kinds of grouping when setting a collaborative task. The first grouping, homogenous grouping, is to group individuals who have similar mindsets and have the same knowledge sets on the task at hand. The second kind of grouping, heterogenous grouping, works opposite to the previous one, as learners are clustered based on their conflicting thoughts and diverse feelings on the task given. Both these methods encourage working in a collaborative situation, though, heterogeneous groups spike more debates which further help in forming new opinions and allows learners to look at something from a different perspective (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Erkens et al. (2016) also confirm that heterogeneous grouping supports collaborative and cooperative learning through an explicit process. This explicit process consists of learners in a heterogenous learning environment making arguments and sharing opinions and suggestions back and forth, which in turn, can help diverse learners look at learning from a different angle.

Monk-Turner and Payne (2005) suggest that educators should analyse how the learners perceive group work, what influences may affect the collaborative process as well as if learners value group work as a learning methodology. Additionally, designers of the collaborative methodology suggest that prior to the implementation of such methods, educators should warm up the group with the use of team-building and social activities. These kinds of activities will foster desirable behaviours that should be portrayed during teamwork (Dyson & Rubin, 2003). In turn, such activities

will help educators organise groups in a way that would result in a fruitful and positive collaborative experience. Educators should also make sure that learner interaction is taking place by constantly monitoring groups during group work (Kaendler, Wiedmann, Rummell & Spada, 2015). Moreover, educators have to keep an eye out for learners who are more cognitively capable than their peers. Studies have confirmed that individuals with high IQs would rather work alone than in a group as they feel that CL does not help them reach their personal goals. In this case, educators are expected to emphasise empowerment and role distribution for all learners within groups containing high IQ students (Monk-Turner & Payne, 2005). When giving high IQ learners roles and responsibilities in group work scenarios, learners will be more satisfied and fulfilled in working with other learners of different intellectual capacities (Lucas, 1999 as cited by Monk-Turner & Payne, 2005). Furthermore, educators need to continuously assist in the collaborative process to ensure that all individuals within the group are engaged in the best learning opportunities (Weinberger, Stegmann, Fischer & Mandi, 2007). This can be done in various ways, like for example formulating or modelling ways in which learners interact with one another or giving them keywords and ideas that would allow them to reach the common goal given (Erkens et al., 2016). Educators can also aid CL through group work by reducing the number of people in a group (Johnson and Johnson, 2008). This is because as Colbeck et al. (2000) argues that learners are less likely to shrug off group work when in smaller groups.

While educators have to gradually learn about the best group work strategies for their contextual realities, learners also have to be taught how to collaborate with one another. Considering that some, if not most learners, are not usually exposed to activities that require collaborative work, educators have to show the learners how to

work together while facilitating the process in order to guarantee a positive learning experience (Erkens et al., 2016). Additionally, learners need to learn how they can contribute to the final product by discussing and sharing thoughts amongst themselves, as well as with the educator (Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Educators have to teach learners that helping each other during the collaborative process also helps with their own learning. Furthermore, learners have to constantly communicate with one another in order to ensure that the discussion created maximises learning (Putnam, 1993). When learners are capable of mastering skills of interaction and cooperation, they increase the level of overall student achievement in group work (Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

2.4.3 The advantages of using CL

Educational literature is replete with arguments that emphasise the benefits of using CL in the classroom. One of the main benefits that is constantly reported throughout the literature is the immediate social benefit that arises from learners cooperating with one another (Monk-Turner & Payne, 2005). Group work allows learners to create relationships with their peers and these relationships help create a conducive environment for collaborative learning (Kutnick, Fung, Mok, Leung, Li, Lee & Lai, 2017). These relationships, in turn, create friendships that can co-exist in and outside of the classroom (Kutnick & Blatchford, 2014). Students working in a collaborative environment tend to perceive their peers as well as group work itself in a positive light, which continuously strengthens the relationships created in the classroom (Dyrud, 2001). According to Slavin (1996), collaborative group work has an optimising effect on inter-group relationships.

Generating these positive kinds of relationships would eventually help learners in the working world. Collaborative work as a method of working is desirable because it helps prepare students for their future careers (Gillies and Boyle, 2010) as well as helps learners work with other colleagues and employees to get the job done (Monk-Turner and Payne, 2005). Additionally, group work promotes the growth and use of interpersonal skills, which are a very important aspect of the holistic development of the learner (Hammar Chiriac & Foslund Frykedal, 2011). Here is where learners learn how to actively listen, communicate and value the prospect of working in a team (Dyrud, 2001). By insisting on the importance of communication during group work, students also share ideas and concepts with one another, thus instilling an understanding of how important it is to obtain different perspectives (Moloi, Morobe & Urwick, 2008). In this manner, when learners are exposed to varying views, they can then effectively solve the task they face, as a team (Bostock, 1998). Hammar Chiriac and Foslund Frykedal (2011) comment on how learners learn to be more patient with one another, as well as inspire each other to strive for better results when working together on a joint assignment.

Students working in teams are known to have improved learning outcomes and have higher achieving grades (Oliveira & Sadler, 2008). When comparing the traditional mode of teaching to learner-centred teaching styles like collaborative group work, Chang and Mao (1999) found out that students learn more in collaborative situations. Several studies highlight that students are more excited and tend to prefer to learn when collaborative work is involved (Peterson & Miller, 2004; Chiriac & Granstrom, 2012). A select number of teachers from a study done by Sikoyo (2010) discuss how students are more instigated to learn when they actively engross themselves in hands-on work that is within a group work setting. Both Dundes (2001) and Walker

(1996) claim that learners working in groups are more likely to grow and hone their critical and problem-solving skills when compared to those working individually, as these skills are usually developed when intermingling with other learners.

2.4.4 The setbacks of using CL

Despite the abundance of aforementioned advantages, educators sometimes hesitate when using CL methodologies to promote learning (Gillies & Boyle, 2010). At times, educators admit to having a preference for students working individually as opposed to collaboratively (Hammar Chiriac & Forslund Frykedal, 2011). One of the main reasons why collaborative work could be seen as a setback is because of its structure. Gillies and Boyle (2010) discuss how group work may stimulate a noisier and more 'chaotic' work area that some teachers may find problematic to manage. Altinyelken (2011) points out that activities become more disruptive and much more tiring to control in a collaborative environment, as such activities promoted educators and learners talking and working at the same time. Traditionally, educators are seen as effective whenever the learners are quiet and organised which is why Altinyelken (2011) states that the process of accepting a noisy classroom might be hard for some teachers. Furthermore, educators prefer traditional methods of teaching over using collaborative methods as CL has no structure and thus, no specific outcome can be expected when using such a method (Hammar Chiriac & Forslund Frykedal, 2011). Considering that CL requires the learner to be more independent, educators at times found it challenging to certify that all learners within a group were working on a given task. In fact, a teacher in Hammar Chiriac and Forslund Frykedal's (2011) study would rather the students work on their own as they had realised that the students were only

learning what they contributed towards the group's project rather than the whole project itself. Moreover, some students in Gillies and Boyle's (2010) study did not want to be responsible for work given in a collaborative format and would instead not do the work at all, thus not gain any learning from that collaborative experience. Educators also commented on facilitation being a demanding task as, during cooperative work, students and groups are usually spread out in the class (Hammar Chiriac & Forslund Frykedal, 2011). This, in turn, would make it difficult for the teacher to make sure that each group is on task throughout the collaborative process. Coaches, according to Bowles and Dwyer (2020), also reported struggling to preserve an equilibrium when debating whether to focus on the team or the athlete. They claimed that trying to give attention to teamwork while still keeping in mind the individual athlete at the centre, was challenging as they found prioritisation to be a dilemma. In summary, teamwork seemed to decrease the time and opportunity for coaches to concentrate on the individuals' attributes.

Educators face other obstacles with CL when it comes to the learners themselves. Michaelson, Knight and Fink (2002, as cited by Monk-Turner & Payne, 2005) affirm that if learners are not nurtured into how to participate in collaborative work, they will likely struggle when trying to initially work in a cooperative environment. As mentioned in previous sections, learners with higher IQ's would rather work alone than in groups. Children with higher IQs perceived group projects to be useless in helping them for their future careers and rarely looked forward to collaborating in a group (Monk-Turner & Payne, 2005). This was due to higher academic learners being grouped with less academically able learners who were not as capable of keeping up with them or not capable of doing all of the work required. (Monk-Turner & Payne, 2005). Furthermore, some learners even worried about their peers taking credit for work that they have not

done. As a matter of fact, learners are completely against doing group work if it allows their peers to slack and free-ride over tasks that they did not do (McKinney & Graham-Buxton, 1993 as cited by Monk-Turner & Payne, 2005)

Collaborative learning requires the use of big spaces for it to be successful; space that may not always be available in schools and other learning environments. CL demands that groups be spaced and spread out over an area to ensure that learners can create discussions without being distracted or interrupted by other groups in the same area (Hammar Chiriac & Forslund Frykedal, 2011). In learning environments, such as a classroom or a yard, this optimal use of space is almost never possible due to the lack of available space. There is also a time constraint that is created by the system of traditional schooling or training sessions which drastically impact the efficient use of CL. Hammar Chiriac and Forslund Frykedal (2011) discuss how school timetabling represents several short lessons that would hinder the teacher's options in using group work as a pedagogical tool, considering it takes time to run an efficient collaborative learning atmosphere. This can be compared to the shortness of planned training sessions for football practice, especially for younger athletes. In short training sessions, one would struggle to cover a certain amount of content over approximately an hour when including constructivist methods such as group work.

2.5 Using learner-centred techniques across Malta

Information on the use of learner-centred techniques in the local scene is scarce, especially when it comes to Maltese football. The Coach Education Department [CED] within the Malta Football Association [MFA] bases its coaching education on a reality-based learning approach (MFA, 2017). This reality-based learning approach is being

implemented in various countries across Europe, as this is what the Union of European Football Associations [UEFA] currently promotes as the best coaching pedagogy for its members and players. The approach is outlined in the UEFA coaching convention, a policy document that describes the basic aims, duties and course standards that UEFA has to offer (UEFA Coaching Convention, 2020). According to this policy, reality-based learning is described as learning a multitude of skills through a reality-based scenario that links football to the world of employment. UEFA (2020) makes use of a reality-based learning model as a motivating experience that allows players to transfer knowledge from abstract form to concrete practice through a learning cycle of reflection and planning. Furthermore, Smith and Van Doren (2004) state that the reality-based learning method concentrates on the essence of learning, on pupil focus and on active and experiential learning. Reality-based learning employs active learning approaches that make pupils responsible for their learning while making it possible to transfer skills learned to the real world (Smith & Van Doren, 2004). When viewing and understanding the definition of a reality-based learning format, one can easily see the similarities that this has to a learner-centred pedagogy. Malta's CED emphasises that by embracing this reality-based approach, coaches are placing learning in a highly contextualised setting (MFA, 2017), where players are continuously learning while acquiring hands-on experience of the game itself. This could be linked with the constructive concept of giving the learner a hands-on experience in learning, and how the skills learned during such a process can be used in other aspects of the learner' life, including the workplace.

Focusing on the promotion of a wider spectrum of learner-centred pedagogies to be utilised in a variety of sports clubs in Malta, is the Institute for Physical Education and Sport [IPES] within the University of Malta. Both the *'Pre-tertiary certificate in the*

foundations of coaching' and *'Bachelors' Degree in Sport and Physical Activity*' highlight in their programme of study the promotion of a variety of coaching philosophies, including an athlete-centred philosophy (University of Malta, 2020). Throughout my personal experience as a B.Sc (Hons) in Sport and Physical Activity student and ultimately graduate, I can recall how a number of modules both encouraged and stressed the importance of using a learner-centred philosophy that promoted knowledge creation by the learners. Such learning needs to be continuously facilitated by the educator. While this was part of my professional education, I am not sure whether such a philosophy is constantly being implemented across the island by qualified coaches or not.

Apart from institutions that teach and promote learner-centred pedagogies, Malta also has examples of promoting a learning-centred pedagogy when it comes to its curricular school teaching. PRIMAS, a survey project, highlighted that Malta showed a positive approach to IBL, ranking high in orientation and standard use of such techniques in comparison to other countries (PRIMAS, 2011). At state level, the National Curriculum Framework [NCF] encourages learner-centred pedagogies which personalise learning to the child's needs while providing a hands-on and collaborative experience between learners and educators (2012). Throughout this policy document, it is constantly stated that teachers should implement learner-centred, inquiry-based and cooperative strategies. The NCF document insists that teachers should focus on the student as a holistic being, that is, taking everything into consideration when it comes to the attributes of the child. Furthermore, the learning outcomes created from the document aim towards putting students at the focus of learning by being aware of the learners' interests (NCF, 2012). Moreover, several Maltese researchers have conducted studies to see how and why learner-centred approaches should be

implemented in the Maltese classroom. Grech (2014) reported positive outcomes emerging from her findings as learners and educators enjoyed the process of implementing inquiry-based activities in the classroom. Moreover, Agius (2016) comments on her personal experience in teaching mathematics through inquiry-based learning and how this experience has taught her about the positives as well as hardships of using different learner-centred pedagogies in today's classroom.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed multiple aspects that are related to the learner-centred paradigm, which include its origin as well as what is necessary to mentally shift to such a pedagogy. While some obstacles may be encountered during such a shift, one can confirm that the move is still possible, according to the literature. Furthermore, this chapter focused mainly on the two learner-centred methods to be used in this study; that is, IBL and CL. Definitions, implementations, drawbacks and benefits were discussed to provide the reader with an overview of what these approaches consist of. The local scenario was also delved into; however, little information was found when specifically tackling the use of IBL and CL in the Maltese football context.

In the next chapter, the research epistemology and methodology will be discussed as well as how the study was organised and conducted.

Chapter 3: Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to explain the research methodology implemented throughout this research study. This chapter provides a step-by-step description of the process taken to conduct this research study, as well as reasons behind methodological decisions taken. The aims and objectives of the study as well as the process of sampling and selecting the participants will also be discussed, together with data collection tools, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Aims and objectives of the study.

When reflecting about the topic chosen for this research study, that of learner-centred pedagogies, the following research questions were formulated:

- Do learner-centred pedagogies positively influence learning in players?
- Is it challenging to use these learner-centred pedagogies with players of different learning abilities?
- How can these learner-centred pedagogies (inquiry-based and collaborative work) be utilised mutually to maximise player learning?

Each research question focuses on a particular area, namely the positive and negative outcomes of using such pedagogies, its implementation with players of different abilities and the successful incorporation of inquiry-based and collaborative learning strategies to maximise player's learning. This research study aims to view learner-centred pedagogies from a coach's perspective and analyses how these pedagogies impact the learning of players as well as the educator's decisions when using such pedagogies.

The research process included the creation and implementation of training session plans that were conducive to a learner-centred environment. These training sessions were both created and implemented by myself. Data was acquired through the observation of the sessions with a specific focus on the practitioner-researcher's thought processes and decision making, based on how players reacted to the learner-centred environment that was being created. As a result, the most prominent data source that contributed mostly to this study were my own reflections. These reflections consisted of my analytical thoughts, decisions taken, as well as an understanding of emotions throughout the duration of the study. Such reflections were recorded prior to, during and after implementing these pedagogies with the players.

The individuals participating in this study were observed during the implementation of learner-centred methods throughout the session to gain some insight into the players' reactions towards inquiry-based and collaborative learning methods. Furthermore, they were asked questions that related to inquiry-based learning and this showed how such pedagogies impacted their cognitive reasoning. Participants were also encouraged to discuss and work together throughout the activities which promoted a collaborative element. The observation of players also helped create a broader picture as to whether educators should be making use of these approaches within their teaching routines.

3.3 Changes contributing to the study due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Throughout the period in which this study was conducted (2019-2021), the world was hit with the COVID-19 virus. The virus prompted the shutdown of many

establishments, including schools and this directly impacted the way data was to be gathered for this research study. Primarily, data was intended to be gathered from students aged eleven to thirteen - hailing from one state co-educational middle school in their 2nd year of studies; i.e. Year 8 students. One class comprising of twenty to twenty-five students would have been selected from the designated school. Additionally, the study would have taken place over a period of five to six weeks during the student's usual physical education lessons. The intended period of data collection was the 2nd quarter of 2020, but schools closed and plans for data collection had to be modified.

This led to the first change, which did not drastically affect the structure of the study. The modification included the addition of gathering data from participants from the primary sector as a possibility instead of middle school students. This change was affected because there was a considerable possibility of being placed in a primary school for the next teaching practicum. This would have allowed me to carry out the dissertation during my teaching practicum, thus making data collection more convenient, considering the situation. However, this alteration was again affected by the COVID-19 pandemic since schools were not accepting people to enter their institutions, especially for this type of study due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order not to jeopardise the dissertation submission timeline, a second drastic change was needed.

This second change was made possible with a form released by the Faculty of Education Dissertation Committee, wherein it gave students the opportunity to change or restructure dissertations without going through a lengthy process again. Due to the fact that working on dissertations in schools was not an option, I opted for such a change. After thorough discussions with my tutor, the planning and

implementation of sessions was to be shifted towards a sporting context rather than inside schools. Additionally, the amount of data to be collected for this study was also altered. It was decided that the study would be done with a football nursery club, involving twelve female participants aged between ten and twelve years. Additionally, the amount of data to be collected was increased as the data was to be collected from nine sessions over a 3-week-period. This was done to ensure that enough data was collected over a period of time.

3.4 Research Design

3.4.1 Sampling

The type of sampling used for this study was that of convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is described as a non-probable manner of selecting participants based on how readily available they are (Salkind, 2010). The main reasoning in selecting convenience sampling for this study is due to the contact that I already had with the players. The participants were readily available during coaching, as I was already their coach prior to the commencement of the study, and the players matched the criteria required to employ this investigatory study. Selecting participants based on certain criteria is important in making sure that the aims of the study and the target population align. In fact, convenience sampling allows the researcher more access to selecting participants that would fit to the study's needs (Emerson, 2015). The participants had to be ten to twelve years old and also had to be attending and practising football at a local football club nursery. Through

convenience sampling, since I knew the players beforehand, I could count on having players of different abilities participating in the study.

3.4.2 Selection of participants

As previously stated, the participants selected were chosen based on their ease of availability. This had added significance when considering that the study was being conducted during a period when a lot of restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic were in place. This also made it easier for me to conduct the study with a group of participants that already knew me and trusted me. The established relationship between myself and the players was important for the completion of this research study as it would help make the players feel more at ease in experimenting with new learning techniques and actively participate without fearing that they would do something incorrectly. Having players feel more at ease and open to participating and experimenting would positively benefit the implementation of these pedagogies while getting the desired responses and reactions.

Prior to informing the participatory group of the study, permission was sought from the club president and the head coach to implement this research study at the designated club. Once permission was granted, the participants were given four documents. These four documents consisted of their information letter, their assent form, their parents'/guardians' information letter, and their parents'/guardians' consent forms. After the collection of the assent and consent forms, the design of session plans commenced and these were then implemented. During the implementation phase, I observed myself in the role of a coach/educator while also observing the participants' reaction and reception of the planned pedagogies. All

twelve participants brought back the forms and participated in this study. The players had varying levels of experience and ability in relation to practising football as a sport. Having participants of different experiences and abilities helped in collecting data that was relevant to better understand the study's research questions. Through convenience sampling, since I knew the participants beforehand, I could count on having players of different abilities participating in the study. Participants attended nine training sessions that worked towards promoting learner-centred pedagogies and they were observed each time they attended, totalling nine observations for each player.

3.4.3 Research methodology

In order to answer the study's research questions, the best way to conduct the study was through a qualitative perspective. Qualitative research consists of the collection and interpretation of data that is rich in meaning and experience (Grossoehme, 2014). This kind of research practice is used to evaluate a person's experience and to understand the outcomes that arise from this experience (Creswell, 2014). This study and consequently the data gathered, consists of gaging the players' experiences towards these learner-centred pedagogies while also personally reflecting on my own experience as a practitioner, which aligns perfectly with the benefits of using qualitative research methods.

While data collection methods are of a qualitative nature, an action research approach was also used to fulfil the study's aims. Action research, defined by Herr and Anderson (2012), is the process of implementing actions that would target particular queries that would need to be answered. These actions are then studied over an

ongoing period of time in a specific environment (Herr & Anderson, 2012). During this study, activities were planned and implemented, targeting the application of learner-centred pedagogies with children. As previously mentioned, participating player's reactions and behaviours were observed, together with my own thought processes, decisions and reflections; both in-action and on-action. Reflection and analysis of each training session happened after every training session. This led to new learning and understanding on my part, impacting future planning as necessary changes to pedagogy were immediately applied in order to improve players' learning from one session to the next. This cycle of actions was repeated with the creation and carrying out of sessions, as this repetitive cycle allowed me, as the researcher, to gain more knowledge, and thus be in a better position to be able to answer the research questions being tackled (Kemmis, 1982 as cited by Herr & Anderson, 2012). Moreover, during action research, the researcher has to thoroughly reflect on what is happening throughout the whole process, whether it be prior, during or after the action has taken place. Herr and Anderson (2012) state that this is important as this helps the researcher in formulating results and findings from the data gathered. Reflection was one of the most important parts for this study since the action research methodology was affected both by myself as a practitioner as well as a researcher. Richardson (1994 as cited by Herr & Anderson, 2012) dictates that action research is closely related to participating in research that allows the researcher to improve upon their own practice with the use of reflection. In this scenario, I was working towards bettering the way I use and apply these pedagogies throughout the research process, with the aim of improving the players' learning experience.

3.4.4 Research tools

The research tools selected for this study were the self-created session plans, observations, and the journal. The aim of the session plans and the observations was to see how the players responded to activities that were learner-centred. The observations were unstructured to allow a deeper understanding of the mechanics of the environment surrounding this study. The session plans also targeted how the researcher implemented and educated using these learner-centred activities. Before and after each session plan was implemented, a journal entry was written up to corroborate thoughts, hypotheses, observations and reflections made. Moreover, the journal aimed to capture as well as stimulate rich thoughts and reflections emerging from the experience gained when coaching through these pedagogies.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

3.5.1 Evaluating players' learning needs prior to the commencement of the study

As mentioned previously, the role of practitioner-researcher was beneficial to the study. Being the players' coach meant a relationship of trust between the children participating in the study and myself already existed. Prior knowledge of the children participating in this study also meant that players' capabilities prior to the start of the study were known to the researcher, and therefore constant comparison of current abilities to past ability levels could be done. Close attention to the players' general behaviour was also part of my role as a coach prior to the start of the research study, and this also helped in identifying any shortcomings that were to be taken into

consideration during the planning and creation of the session plans. Such prior knowledge of players was important so as to identify progress made by the players from the beginning of the study towards the end.

3.5.2 Designing the activities and session plans

When designing session plans, I kept the focus on having learning activities that were based on learning through inquiry and/or collaboration. These activities were planned to promote continuous active learning through promoting analysis and reflection from the learners. Activities were also designed to frequently encourage collaboration, whether directly or indirectly related to the activity's aims. The activities were likened to realistic scenarios that occurred during a football match, to help give players a more concrete perspective of learning. Through the implementation of learner-centred pedagogies, skill learning was directly related to the sport. These skills included physical football skills such as dribbling and passing, cognitive skills such as analysing the continuously changing environment and taking decisions, and interpersonal skills such as communication and active listening. The activities were composed following a structured format. This structured format was compromised of initially explaining the activity to the participants. They then carry out the activity while allowing sufficient time for questioning, collaboration and reflection. This format was followed to make sure that the players were given enough time to understand, as well as to practice and reflect on what they were doing, as this would more likely increase collaborative and inquiry participation. The activities planned were then placed and incorporated into a session plan.

A total of nine sessions were planned and implemented throughout this study. These sessions consisted of a warm-up, two main activities and a cool-down (refer to appendix 11-19). Initially, three main activities were planned in one session, but due to the time it took to implement the learner-centred pedagogies themselves, one activity had to be removed. This was done to make sure that I had enough time to implement the pedagogies adequately and for the players to have enough time to process and reflect on the activities they were participating in. When planning the session, it was ascertained that enough time was planned for each activity as well as for questioning and discussions. Furthermore, sessions were adapted to all ability levels, through creating different formats or variations to the activities, to ensure participation and optimal learning opportunities for all the players.

3.5.3 Observations

Observations are described as the method used to view and understand people in their natural environments (Baker, 2006). Gibson and Brown (2009) also confirm that observations help researchers comprehend what individuals do and why they do so. While looking at the various kinds of observation methods that exist, it was decided to use participatory unstructured observation for the purpose of this study. Unstructured observations are types of observation where the researcher does not follow a regime nor schedule to conduct the observation. Instead, data is collected by working through all the events that are seen in practice (Gibson & Brown, 2009). Here, the researcher already has some knowledge of what the observation can lead to, but not exactly what may be observed. Throughout unstructured observations,

researchers must note anything observed that directly relates to the research questions, which may constitute to a lot of data (Given, 2008).

The observations were done through a participatory research approach, where the researcher seeks to be accepted into the insider group to gain more information on the players' perspectives. This acceptance was already present prior to the study, and this allows the researcher to experience what the players go through, while closely viewing how players interact with the activities provided (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

3.5.4 Carrying out the observations

The observations were carried out after the participants and parents/guardians signed the assent and consent forms respectively. Dates for the observations were pre-planned, allowing the researcher to create a time frame of when to plan, conduct and observe the sessions created, as well as to reflect-on-action after the implementation phase. The nine observations that took place while implementing the planned sessions happened over a three-week period. The actual sessions were scheduled to last seventy-five minutes. However, considering the amount of time players took to settle down at the start of each session and the amount of time it took myself to instruct and coach the athletes, I actively observed for approximately fifty minutes in each session. All the participants partaking in the study were observed during all training sessions and they were aware that they were being observed and what the study was about.

During the observations, field notes of the observations were recorded. Some of these notes were taken during the session; particularly when players were having water breaks or were practising the activity given to them. Furthermore, some notes were also written down after the session was completed. This was to guarantee that all the related to the events corroborated in the study that occur are not lost or forgotten (Mulhall, 2003). Gibson and Brown (2009) state that field notes can take on a variety of forms, but, particularly, for this study, the field notes consisted of notes regarding observed behaviour and reactions that related to the research questions identified at the beginning of the study. These observation notes provided the researcher with the opportunity to directly analyse how the players reacted towards the use of learner-centred pedagogies. The observation notes served as a real-life account of what was happening when the created session plans were being implemented. After the carrying out of all the observations and recording of field notes, these notes were then incorporated into the journal that was created.

3.5.5 Journal

The journal is portrayed as a multidimensional research tool that allows researchers to reflect, criticise and analyse their own work (Anderson, 2012) through the documentation of written entries chronologically ordered by date (Hewitt, 2017). In this study, it was important for me as a practitioner-researcher to reflect and analyse my own work, as this directly related to the research questions of the study. Furthermore, the use of journal writing allows practitioner-researchers to improve on their own production of work by creating a link between theory and practice, as what is learnt emerges directly from professional practice (Dyment & O'Connell, 2011 as

cited by Bashan & Holsbat, 2017). Journals are also considered flexible research tools that allow the researcher to collect data over a period of time (Bolger, Davis & Rafealli, 2003 as cited by Hewitt, 2017). This was one of the many reasons why the journal was selected as a data collection tool for this research study; considering that the researcher had to record and reflect on different aspects of practice over a period of 3 weeks. Duke (2012 as cited by Hewitt, 2017) states that the journal is most effective when used with other research methods. In this study, the journal was used in conjunction with unstructured participatory observations to explore and reflect on the behaviour of the players as well as myself as the practitioner-researcher (Bryman, 2012).

3.5.6 Writing the journal

The process of journal writing for this study consisted of documenting anything relevant to the study itself, including my reflective analysis and decision making, which is why journal entries were written prior to the start of sessions (during the planning phase) as well as after a session had been completed. Stone, Shiffman, Schwartz, Broderick and Hufford (2003) confirm this to be one of the valuable aspects that journals have to offer as it allows researchers to write and reflect on an experience close to the time the event actually takes place. Furthermore, any observation or event occurrence that happened during the session was documented as soon as possible whether it be during the session or right after the session, as it makes writing more accurate to what happened (Stone et al., 2003).

As already indicated above, the journals aided in taking an action research approach for this study by allowing myself to write about my reflections and improvements for

the session plans between one session and another. As previously stated, two journal entries were written for every session that occurred; a journal entry prior to the implementation of each session plan and another one after the completion of each session. In total, eighteen entries were written as reflective accounts in the journal. The entries prior to the sessions mainly consisted of reflections directly related to planning for these kind of learner-centred pedagogies and how these would directly affect the learners as well as the practitioner-researcher. On the other hand, the post-session entries entailed the researcher's thoughts, analysis and interpretations of what occurred as well as how the players reacted to the planned activities. Alaszewski (2006) suggests that while journaling is mostly known for its valuable reflection on practice, it also allows the researcher to interpret the situations observed through the knowledge they already possess. Once the planned sessions were completed, the journal entries were terminated. At this point, the journal entries were printed, as this made it easier to thematically analyse the data available.

3.6 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was the selected approach to analyse the data collected for this study. Braun and Clarke (2012) describe thematic analysis as a method that identifies, organises and creates patterns within the available data. This kind of analysis permits the researcher to make sense of the patterns created that directly relate to the topic being researched (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Furthermore, thematic analysis is frequently used because it helps address and accommodate a variety of research questions and topics (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The process of thematic analysis began by extracting codes from the journal entries written (Refer to Table 3.6.1).

<u>Journal extract</u>	<u>Codes</u>
<p>' ... When explaining the aims of today's session, with focus on interpersonal skills, the players seemed puzzled and did not understand that communication was not just speaking. Furthermore, when I emphasised the concept of actively listening and being clear in discussion, players did not comprehend what was asked of them and did not implement it in practice. In fact, it was taking much more time than expected to explain these concepts.</p>	<p>Players were not knowledgeable about how to communicate with one another.</p>
	<p>Players do not know the skill, so they did not do it in practice.</p>
	<p>Lengthy process to get players to understand.</p>

Table 3.6.1 – Part of Log 4 (04/12/2020) journal entry and extracted codes.

Once this is completed, codes are placed into different classifications (Refer to Table 3.6.2) from which major themes are then created from the data collected (Refer to Table 3.6.3 and 3.6.4).

<u>Codes</u>	<u>Classification</u>
<p>Players were not knowledgeable about how to communicate with one another.</p>	<p>Pre-requisites needed.</p>
<p>Players do not know the skill, so they did not do it in practice.</p>	
<p>Lengthy process to get players to understand.</p>	<p>Time as a limiting factor.</p>

Table 3.6.2 - Codes and Classifications.

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Main theme</u>
<p>Pre-requisites needed</p>	<p>The drawbacks that are presented when trying to implement learner-centred pedagogies</p>
<p>Time as a limiting factor</p>	

Table 3.6.3 - Classification and Main Theme.

<u>Example of a sub-theme</u>	<u>Main theme:</u>
<p>Pre-requisites for learning through learner-centred pedagogies</p>	<p><i>The drawbacks that are presented when trying to implement learner-centred pedagogies</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Players not knowing what a discussion was and not wanting to do discussions ➤ Players were not knowledgeable about how to communicate with one another. ➤ Players not being knowledgeable about basic skills so could not promote learner-centred pedagogies. ➤ Students not knowing how to respond to questions. ➤ Players do not know the skill and did not do it in practice. ➤ Learners fearing answering incorrectly in front of teammates/ not being used to questioning. ➤ Learners could not answer questions which were not specifically linked to a context, as they did not know what the context was. ➤ When learners were not aware of the topic they did not have enough knowledge to answer the questions and found it difficult to answer. ➤ IBL learning still needs facilitation or giving players basic cues before moving into constructivist learning when learners are not so knowledgeable. ➤ Players did not know what certain vocabulary meant. 	

Table 3.6.4 - Example of Sub-theme and its Main Theme.

The major themes that emerged from the journal entries are as follows:

- Learner-centred pedagogies' positive influence on player learning;
- Drawbacks presented when implementing learner-centred pedagogies;
- Using learner-centred pedagogies with mixed ability players; and
- Maximising learning through the incorporation of inquiry-based and collaborative learning methods.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Before the study commenced, permission letters were given to both the club president (refer to appendix 1) and the head coach (refer to appendix 2). Information letters were also given to the participants (refer to appendix 3 & 4) and their parents/guardians (refer to appendix 5 & 6). Letters were given to all of the personnel mentioned above to make sure that participants and parents/guardians were well informed on what the research study was about and what participation in this study entailed. Additionally, assent forms were given to the participants (refer to appendix 7 & 8) in order to obtain permission from the players to observe their reception towards learner-centred pedagogies throughout the duration of the study. Permission from the parent/guardian had to also be obtained through consent forms (refer to appendix 9 & 10) due to the participants being young. Only after the collection of both the signed assent and consent forms did the planned sessions commence with the players. Fortunately, all the children attending the chosen sessions prior to the study, as well as their parents gave their consent/assent for voluntary participation in the study.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter summarises the research methods utilised in the execution of this study. This research study employed a qualitative action research approach conducted and applied by the practitioner-researcher. The changes that the study incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the reasons behind such changes were also presented. Additionally, a journal was kept, which constituted the main body of data available for analysis. It revolved mainly around the practitioner-researcher's observations and analysis of observations emerging from nine sessions which were planned and

implemented by the practitioner-researcher herself. The ethical considerations that were taken as part of this study were also deliberated, along with the procedure taken to analyse the data gathered. The next chapter will discuss the main findings of the study.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings emerging from this research study. This study consists of the creation and implementation of nine football training session plans. The objective of these nine sessions was to see how learner-centred pedagogies could be implemented within a football nursery through an action research approach. During these sessions, nine unstructured observations of the sessions being delivered together with the researcher's reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action constituted the data. As part of the research process, a journal was kept. I, the researcher, analysed and took note of how children reacted towards the learner-centred pedagogies implemented in the study. These observations together with my reflective thoughts prior to, during and after each session were kept in the aforementioned journal. A total of 18 journal entries were created.

The unstructured observations and the reflective journal were analysed using thematic analysis. By combining these two research tools, major and important themes that resulted from this study were identified:

- Learner-centred pedagogies' positive influence on player learning
- Drawbacks presented when implementing learner-centred pedagogies
- Using learner-centred pedagogies with mixed ability players
- Maximising learning through the incorporation of inquiry-based and collaborative learning methods

When referring to an event that happened during a particular session, the session number will be provided. When referring to part of a session plan, the number of the session plan will be referenced, and the part being explained will be attached as a figure from the session plan itself. Additionally, when directly quoting from the

reflective journal, quotes will be referenced as a log entry number and date format. For example, when referring to the first log that was entered on the 1st of December 2020, its reference would be the following: Log 1 – 01/12/2020.

4.2 Learner-centred pedagogies' positive influence on player learning

4.2.1 Creating a motivational player-centred learning environment

As stated in the literature review chapter, educators must create a motivating and positive learning environment to make sure that learner-centred pedagogies can be used effectively (Hubball & Robertson, 2004). Throughout the duration of this research study, multiple strategies were used in order to create and maintain a positive player-centred environment.

Initially, throughout the training sessions, players were made aware of the objectives and aims of the session. Kirschner and Sweller (2006) deem this action as an important task that should be done by the educator in order to ensure the successful establishment of an inquiry-based environment. Furthermore, creating questions that are concise and specific were deemed important (Log 3 - 04/12/2020) as these kinds of questions allow players to focus, analyse and reflect on the situation at hand (Kirschner & Sweller, 2006). In fact, the questions written for Session 2 were 'specific, clear and concise ... the players responded accordingly to each question by reflecting and being specific in their answers' (Log 4 - 04/12/2020). This opposite of such a statement could be observed in Session 3 by noticing that the question 'When your teammate is in possession of the ball and marked, what do you have to do?' was not

specific enough and not clearly pointing to a specific aspect. Thus, players could not engage in focused reflection and answer the question appropriately. In Log 5 (05/12/2020), it was noted that apart from questions being concise and specific, questions should also challenge the players' cognitive abilities. High-order different questioning styles help with stimulating different cognitive abilities that players have (Hubball & Roberston, 2004). To continue emphasising the importance of varying and adapting questions to players' abilities, in Session 4, the concept of sub-questions started being used. These are questions that aim to guide the players towards the answer of the main question; one step at a time (Log 7 - 07/12/2020). Therefore, questions should be progressive, increasing difficulty throughout. Suebnukarn and Haddawy (2006) speak about this concept as creating a stairway for learning, in which learning is facilitated by the educator with further questioning to promote more thinking and learning. This is clearly echoed in one of the later sessions where players seemed puzzled when asked a question in regards to something they were not aware of. However, when facilitating questions were used to guide the players, two players 'made the connection and answered the question' (Log 12-12/12/2020).

Another way to establish a motivational learner-centred environment is to make sure that players are given enough time and opportunity to practice the implemented methodologies. From a coach's planning perspective, it was realised, as from the 3rd session, that the amount of activities carried out had to be reduced. This was an instrumental change when planning and implementing the session plans as more work could be done on creating an inquisitive and collaborative learning environment for players to work in. It was realised and stated by myself, that by decreasing activities 'players were given more time to think and reflect as well as discuss with their peers' (Log 7- 07/12/2020). To compensate for the addition of sub-questions as

well as to make the environment less stressful for the players, the content and questions being done were reduced in each individual session from session 4 onwards. This is to allow the learners more time to reflect and think as well as to avoid giving them excessive information that players would not be able to absorb and learn. As I argued in Log 9: 'reducing the load of questions and adding on facilitating questions will help players tackle the session more efficiently' (09/12/2020). Grech (2010) insists that educators should dedicate enough time when planning towards thinking and conversing time for the learners, which is what was done during this stage of the study. Players were given about two minutes to discuss any strategies prior to the start of an activity throughout all of the sessions when collaborative work was involved. This proved to be effective as players deliberated on a multitude of strategies to overpower their opponents during the activities.

When it came to organising the players for group work, it was noticed that smaller groups helped in improving the facilitation process amongst players. In Session 3 I observed that players were more keen to answer questions when they were divided into smaller groups, as opposed to when they were divided into bigger groups as in the original setting (Log 7 - 07/12/2020). Smaller groups also positively affected and increased collaborative discussion within the same groups. Colbeck et al. (2000) state that the reasoning behind this could be that learners are less likely to fear answering a question or acting incorrectly in front of a smaller group.

Players' engagement and participation were necessary requirements if a motivational learner-centred environment was to be successfully implemented. The players were encouraged to help one another whenever they could as well as to actively participate throughout the session. One instance that left a mark in relation to the previous statement, is when players collaborated and motivated one another during an activity

in Session 6, which was actually working towards the improvement of individual skills (Log 10 - 11/12/2020). Dyson and Rubin (2003) insist that these are the kinds of social behaviours that should be shown by learners in order to ensure a positive learning experience for everyone involved. In fact, in another scenario, particularly in Session 2, one player took a facilitating role herself and was explaining and showing her partner how to control the ball properly. A similar scenario happened in front of the whole group, where one player answered a reflective question in front of everyone, and then proceeded to explain to the group on how to keep position during game-play and to avoid creating open spaces (Session 7). The player took an active role in learning as well as facilitating learning of her teammates. Johnson and Johnson (2008) would describe this player as a learner who knows how to work with others while also reflecting and learning herself. Upon further observation of the sessions implemented, I quickly realised that the players seemed to pay more attention to their teammates' explanations than to the explanations I provided. These events link up to one of my personal goals for this intervention, that is to continuously facilitate learning, as 'I want[ed] to experiment with players starting to realise concepts on their own through group discussions as I believe this will create an even more player-led environment' (Log 11-11/12/2020).

4.2.2 Positive qualities players gained through the learner-centred approaches

4.2.2.1 Cognitive skills

Players made a massive improvement when it came to the development of cognitive skills throughout the research study. Primarily, players would be hesitant to respond

to questions asked, or else give answers without thinking them through (Session 1). Learners who are not used to learning through learner-centred pedagogies will most likely feel uncomfortable and choose not to actively participate during the lesson (Trautmann et al., 2004), which is what happened during the first session. For this reason, it is vital for the educator to warm up the learners towards these pedagogies and facilitate learning for them (Kahn & O'Rourke, 2005, as cited by Rooney, 2012). By giving such learners the opportunity to actively learn through these pedagogies, players were improving their cognitive abilities.

As the data collected implies, the players of this study showed progressive improvement in critical thinking, decision making, problem-solving and analytical skills. An activity that was very effective in promoting the abovementioned cognitive skills was a game of lions and tigers (refer to Figure 4.2.1).

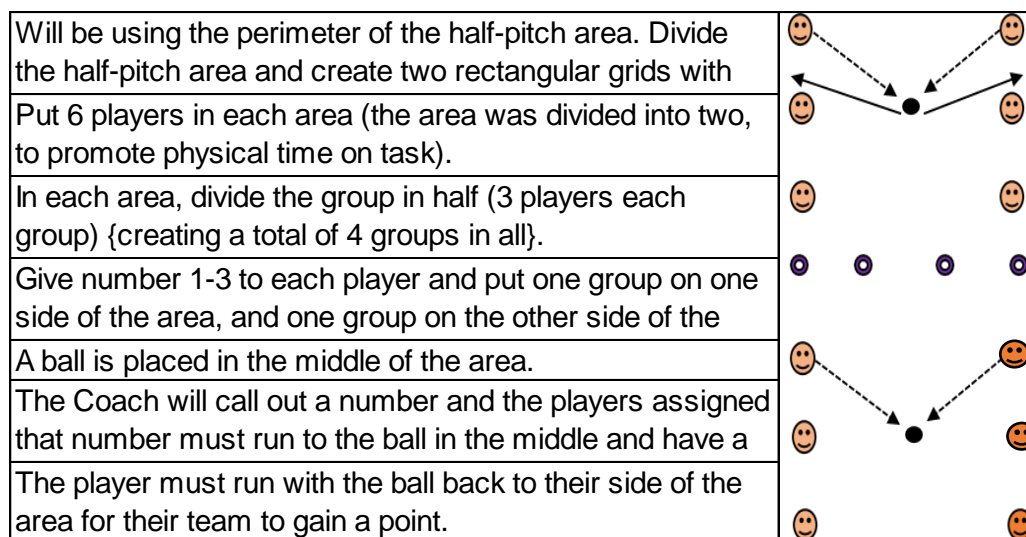


Figure 4.2.1- Session 5: Main Activity 1 (Lions and Tigers)

This game tested their abilities to think on the spot and analyse the situation and opponent in front of them. When asked the question: 'In a 1v1 situation, how do you

improvise if the defender is at your back trying to take the ball?’ some players reflected upon and identified what actions they were doing to dribble past their opponents. Players also realised the importance of improvisation and the ability to react to changes in the environment. They argued that the use of fakes when improvising in play would delay the opponent’s movement and thus allowing players to keep possession of the ball (Session 5). Similarly, players spoke about how they would run with the ball towards the opponent and then change their running speed to make it more difficult for the opponent to catch up’ (Session 5). Both these instances indicate that players used critical thinking and decision making, which, according to Hubball and Robertson (2004), are important assets to have when participating in sport.

Additionally, realisation and implementation of these cognitive skills were highlighted further with questioning. These questions guided the players towards reflecting and realising what they could do to tackle the dilemma that they were facing. Session 1, main activity 1 (refer to Figure 4.2.2) was geared towards quick thinking and targeting the best route to dribble through.

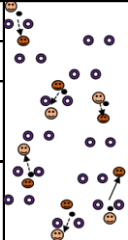
Create gates consisting of two markers around the area provided.	
Let players pair up by themselves	
Players have to partner up and have some time (2-minute cap) to discuss a strategy together on which gates to go through.	
Players have to go through the gates, once the coach claps, they have 1 minute to clear as many gates as they can.	

Figure 4.2.2 -Session 1: Main activity 1 (Gate Keepers)

Players here were faced with some problems, as more than one pair would enter a set of gates at the same time. Through questioning, all players answered that they should avoid entering the gates at the same time so as to avoid dribbling traffic and tight spaces (Session 1). Moreover, something similar occurred again during Session 4, where a child arranged her positioning during play due to a question asked that directly related to supporting teammates during passing. Thus, inquiry-based learning was giving learners the skills and tools necessary for handling challenging tasks that may present themselves (Wright, Burrows & MacDonald, 2004). Another way wherein questioning aided with the development of cognitive abilities in players was questioning for confirmation of task. During the first session of this research study, one player already knew where to pass to even before the ball had arrived at her feet. As soon as it arrived, she immediately passed the ball to someone else. When the player was asked how she managed to pass the ball so quickly, she responded that she analysed the surroundings beforehand and therefore decided where she was going to pass the ball as soon as she received it (Session 1). In this scenario, questioning was used to teach the other players about thinking ahead and being prepared. When reflecting upon players reaction prior to and post questioning, it was seen that the players performed much better and made use of more cognitive and physical skills after questioning and reflection was done (Log 10-11/12/2020). Questioning allowed the players to reflect upon their use of cognitive and physical skills, which according to Schuweisfurth (2011), is one of the many outcomes that arises from the use of inquiry-based learning approaches.

Players also expanded their vocabulary greatly when it came to different strategies and scenarios in the world of football. One of the first phrases that I made sure that the players were clearly mindful of was 'opening up in space' (Log 2-01/12/2020).

Space awareness is important for any athlete and is directly related to the learner’s ability to cognitively read and act on the given situation (González Víllora, Garcia López, Guitérrez-Díaz & Pastor-Vicedo, 2013). When comparing the first session to the last, a huge difference was noted in players’ responses as well as their performance in relation to spatial awareness. There were multiple situations that occurred in relation to learning about space awareness over the course of the whole research study. During Session 5 for example, a player made the point that when players open up with the ball, they make it more difficult for the other team to press them since there is a lot of space to cover (Log 10 – 11/12/2020). Additionally, players managed to perceive main activity 1 in Session 6 (Refer to Figure 4.2.3) in a manner that directly relates to spatial awareness.

Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise.	
Divide this area into 3 sections with markers (lengthwise).	
The 3 sections are again divided through the middle, to make space for 2 groups to work at once (promotion of small groupings).	
Players are divided into groups of 3 or in pairs. (3v1 or 2v1 across the area).	
Groups of players on the outer sections of the area will keep possession and pass the ball to one another whereas the group in the middle section are the defenders trying to take the ball.	
The groups on the outside have to pass to each other once completing a certain number of passes through the channel without the middle defenders getting the ball.	
Once the middle group manages to take the ball, the group that lost the ball have to in their place within the middle.	

Figure 4.2.3- Session 6: Main activity 1(Middle transition)

One player could correlate the drill aspect of the activity to that of a game, where it was explained that the side grids represent the channels in which wingers and full-backs have to run through to open up in space when in possession of the ball (Session

6). In Session 7, a player also managed to explain why it is important to stay in position and correlate the above reasoning with the space awareness concept. The main concept explained was that the team needs to keep their positions so that everyone within the team knows where the others are in space, and this leads to the avoidance of leaving open space for the opponents to penetrate through (Log 8-08/12/2020). All these occurrences show the players' mastery when it comes to understanding space awareness and linking it to real-life game situations. Hence, the learner-centred pedagogies used in this study have helped players gain new knowledge plus improve the applicability of such knowledge to practice. Building up on the concept of spatial awareness, Sessions 4 and 6 focused on strategies for keeping possession in space through width and depth. During the fourth session, players were briefly introduced to width and depth through explanation and implementation of both components. Further on in Session 6, the players were given the task of answering questions based on the previous information given to them in relation to opening up in space. Players here made the connection and used language like width, depth, moving in space and mobility to explain the importance of opening up in space when in possession of the ball (Log 12 - 12/12/2020). The learning and use of new vocabulary is confirmed to be one of the biggest advantages mentioned in literature when using a learner-centred format (Altinyelken, 2011).

Towards the end of this research study, players learned and realised how vital these skills were when playing, and some players even commented on how the mastery of these skills can define a win or loss in a game (Session 8/ Log 16 - 18/12/2020).

4.2.2.2 Social skills

Players also showed progress related to the development of social skills. Despite players being predominantly exposed to these skills prior to this research study, they did not know how to use and implement them in the correct manner. Like with all learner-centred pedagogies, the learners have to first be taught how to collaborate with one another (Erkens et al., 2016) before being able to learn and acquire different sets of social skills.

Players had to initially learn how to properly communicate with their teammates. While communication was present, it was not as consistent and articulated as desired. Players did not know what was meant by clear communication skills and how to actively listen. In Session 2, the difference between speaking clearly and speaking incoherently with the assistant coach was demonstrated to the players (Log 4 - 04/12/2020). Erkens et al. (2016) confirm that modelling methods help facilitate the understanding of concepts to learners, without needing to directly give them the answer. After the demonstration, when asking players to identify the difference between the two scenarios, players easily made the link that 'when speaking more clearly, the person you are talking to understands more of what you are trying to say' (Session 2). With this in mind, players worked more towards improving their communication skills. In fact, they were seen communicating more clearly in Session 3, where players were calling out to one another for help or to open up in space. Clear communication skills are an asset to have as these help the learner interact with the world while developing in a holistic manner (Hammar Chiriac & Forslund Frykedal, 2011). Furthermore, discussion and communication time continued to increase, as players were starting to realise how important these skills were for any kind of team sport (Halldorsson, 2019), especially when playing at a disadvantage. In Session 6,

main activity 2 (Refer to Figure 4.2.4) tested the attacking players' ability to work together towards scoring while indirectly challenging defensive players to work at a disadvantage.

Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise and use the small goals within this area.	
Divide this area in half, as two groups will be working at the same	
Divide the players into two groups (6 players each.)	
Players will take turns in participating both in the attacking and defensive teams in their areas.	
3v2s will take place where the advantaged are attackers, the other players are defenders.	
The objective for the attackers is to push the ball forward and score.	
The objective of the defenders is to stop the ball from being scored.	

Figure 4.2.4- Session 6: Main activity 2(Finishing on Goal)

Even with a player less, the defending players still managed to defend the area and get the ball. Upon observation, it was quite evident that the disadvantaged team were communicating and listening to each other better in comparison to the advantaged team, which is why they were managing to take the ball despite having a player less (Log 12 - 12/2020). Players were also creative when using communication skills during the sessions. This was particularly evident in Session 4, main activity 1, where players produced the idea of inventing coded communication strategies to confuse their opponents by calling out their teammates using their surnames or else creating new names for one another. It was an effective clear communication skill that was mutually agreed upon by the whole group, which enabled them to solve the task handed to them through collaborative work (Webb et al., 2014).

Leadership was also a skill that most players nurtured as the study progressed. In Session 4, I reflected on an instance where a player took control and directed her team with respect to positioning while leading them towards the goal. Another player

for example took on a leadership role while directing communication with the rest of the team. She led the discussion of what strategy to take when defending their goal post. She ultimately also took the final decision after directing discussions (Session 5). During such instances, players made attempts to better their communication skills and used them to describe to others the best course of action, thus taking on a leadership role. While there were regular one-off occurrences from various players, one player stood out the most when it came to progressively developing her leadership skills. She showed effective progress and proved to be a natural leader to all her teammates. Specifically, in Log 16 (18/12/2020), I reflected on the role this player was taking when she was seen taking charge of the group by guiding them on what positions to take as well as uniting the group into functioning as a team. This was especially seen during match days, where she led the game towards the win through promoting communication and team unity. Personally, I believe that due to the implementation of both inquiry-based and collaborative learning techniques, this player will grow and hone her leadership skills as promoted by Barros (2011).

Another fundamental social skill that players developed over the course of this study was the action of helping each other and giving feedback to one another whenever it was needed (Lerchenfeldt, Mi & Eng, 2019). There were several instances over the course of three sessions, where players were observed helping teammates with positioning as well as encouraging reasoning during play. Peer feedback was also being given. In Session 4 for example, players were helping each other to improve their passing technique by giving specific feedback about leg positioning when giving the pass, as well as focusing on the point of contact of the ball with the passing foot. Multiple players were also providing tactical feedback such as where to move in order to close down available space for the opponent to manoeuvre as well as feedback on

technical aspects such as how to prepare one's body positioning in order to receive a pass more effectively (Session 7). This shows that pedagogies that promote a collaborative element between learners, increase the learning that occurs between the learners themselves as they learn from and with each other. When learners work together and help each other grow, they are increasing the likelihood of overall achievement (Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

All these social skills are essential to continuously help players grow holistically and be ready to enter the working world whenever necessary. Players showed a lot of improvement in the acquirement of these skills in comparison to what they started with at the beginning of the study (Log 12 - 12/12/2020).

4.3 The drawbacks that are presented when trying to implement learner-centred pedagogies

4.3.1 Time as a limiting factor when applying learner-centred pedagogies

From an educator's point of view, personally it felt like there was not enough time for meticulous planning nor enough time during delivery when focusing entirely on learner-centred pedagogies. In fact, in the first journal log I reflected on how one session plan took approximately 4 hours to plan (Log 1-25/11/2020). Educators participating in Sikoyo's (2010) study agree in emphasising that it took a lot of time for them to plan sessions. This was also highlighted in Mtika and Gates' (2010) research study where teachers confirmed that they viewed inquiry-based and learner-centred pedagogies as being very slow approaches for learning. Apart from the

abovementioned difficulty, preparing the questions for the session was also time-consuming. In both Log 1 (25/11/2020) and Log 7 (07/12/2020), it is described that questions, particularly sub-questions, were difficult to create and a large amount of time had to be devoted to this during the planning process. Additionally, I felt pressured into getting session plans ready on time since there was not much time in the reflecting and planning phase from one session to the next. Having three sessions a week, in which two of the sessions were in consecutive days, finding time to plan the session was a difficult task. This was due to the lengthy process of planning sessions revolving around learner-centred pedagogies (Log 3- 04/12/2020). Multiple educators stressed that they never had enough time fitted into their timetable to plan such lessons comfortably (Otara et al., 2019), which can be compared to the struggle I encountered when planning sessions so close together.

Apart from time management being a major issue when planning learner-centred sessions, the implementation and running of the activities were also of concern. Prior to carrying out the activities planned, 'I realised that these [activities] are going to take up a bulk of time in one session' (Log 1 - 25/11/2020). Furthermore, an activity in Session 4 had to be removed because of the 'intense discussions during group work that arose during the first main activity'. Hammar Chiriak and Forslund Frykedal (2011) state that group discussions tend to take up a lot of time, time which is not timetabled during the regular schedule of a student's day. Furthermore, the seventy-five-minute slot that I had for training sessions was too short when considering the long group discussions and elaborations the players had. This directly affected the amount of content I could explain and do during one training session.

Moreover, when explaining these learner-centred activities, it took me longer than expected to get the aims across to the players (Log 4- 04/12/2020). Learners did not

always understand what was expected of them due to this being a new method of learning for them, thus impacting the time efficiency of the session. Learners were also struggling and taking long to answer questions, especially in the early stages of the study (Log 2-01/12/2020; Log 6- 05/12/2020). Sometimes, it is not easy for learners to change the way they have been learning for a long time, and as Walker (2007 as cited by Agius, 2016) states, this change may be overwhelming for learners. Therefore, dedicating time for this change to happen is a must.

Another point to be highlighted was the lowered time dedicated to physical activity when implementing learner-centred pedagogies such as inquiry-based and collaborative learning. The main aim of sports training and physical education is the importance of keeping physical time on task constantly high. However, when implementing such pedagogies, it was noted that whilst asking questions and organising the players in groups, time was being lost from the physical aspect of the session. In fact, in Session 7, physical time on task was low and 'I noticed players fidgeting and complaining that [discussions] were a waste of time'. Michaelson et al. (2002 as cited by Monk-Turner & Payne, 2005) confirm that learners may have doubts about learner-centred pedagogies due to their limited knowledge of it and thus, think of it as a nuisance. Furthermore, there is not much research on the relationship between the decline of physical activity levels and the use of learner-centred pedagogies. Thus, educators implementing these learner-centred pedagogies should be made aware of this problem prior to using the methods. By creating awareness, educators would be more prepared to tackle this situation when it arises.

4.3.2 Pre-requisites for learning through learner-centred pedagogies

When considering that the players were not usually exposed to learner-centred pedagogies, certain complications in implementing these methods arose, particularly in relation to the learners' prior knowledge. This knowledge involved both general football knowledge and knowledge needed to learn in a learner-centred environment.

As previously mentioned, it is important to always make the aims and objectives clear when implementing learner-centred pedagogies. Without having this knowledge, players struggled to fully participate. Primarily, when learners did not understand the activity, they did not actively engage in learning at all. Not understanding or knowing the content directly affected the implementation of inquiry-based and collaborative learning. As I wrote in my reflective journal: 'Without knowing the content or understanding what the task was, players were less likely to be able to focus on the group work aspect or reflect on questions asked by myself to promote learning' (Log 12 - 12/12/2020). Burlison (2007) confirms that learners that do not have a basic understanding of the content are more likely to struggle in performing the task properly. Furthermore, when some players found the activity to be more challenging than expected, they avoided answering questions and did not ask others to help them. The more complicated and difficult the task was, the less likely players were able to gain knowledge through learner-centred pedagogies (Log 13 - 14/12/2020). The first main activity in session 6 was too challenging and was not understood by the entire group. From what I observed during the session, it seemed that the complexity level of the exercise also directly affected the implementation of inquiry-based and collaborative strategies. Players failed to reflect and answer the questions in a proper manner as they had initially not understood them and found the activity mentioned

above too challenging (Session 6). Moreover, apart from the importance of explaining the objectives of the specific activity, players should also be made aware of the objectives and aims that arise from learner-centred pedagogies themselves. During the first session and first activity that promoted discussion amongst players, certain learners did not understand the reason why they had to have discussions prior to the start of the activity. In fact, despite suggesting that players should discuss amongst themselves, a couple of players still decided to go against the advice given. These two players later worked in pairs and they were struggling to get through the gates as one was going in one direction, and the other player was going in another (Session 1). It was only after a couple of sessions that did these players started realising the need for a discussion before the start of an activity and how valuable the discussion was to the successful completion of the exercise. Considering that players at this stage were not so exposed to these kinds of pedagogies, it is important that educators always make an emphasis to communicate these goals to the learner (Kirschner & Sweller, 2006).

From the very start of this study, it was evident that some players lacked basic communication skills. Players were not completing activities and tasks handed to them concerning group work like passing, due to the lack of communication between one learner and another (Session 1). Furthermore, the players at times seemed puzzled and did not understand how to properly communicate with another person. 'When I emphasised the concept of active listening and being clear when communicating... players would shake their head and look confused' (Log 4 - 04/12/2020). Without knowing what effective communication is, it was only natural that players failed to communicate effectively. Within the same context, players also struggled to define the meaning of interpersonal skills, which was an important aspect

to mention and implement with the learners throughout this study. There were multiple instances throughout the sessions, where players were asked to identify or explain what an interpersonal skill was, and the majority of the players always came up empty-handed (Session 1; Session 4; Session 6). When reflecting on this I realised that the reason why the players were struggling to answer questions was because they 'did not fully understand nor comprehend what these mean yet' (Log 4 - 04/12/2020).

The same could be observed when new vocabulary was introduced to the players. As also previously mentioned, players failed to identify the meaning of technical terms they had not heard or known about beforehand. In Session 7, there was an instance where players did not know what the words 'overlap' and 'curved run' meant. Without the knowledge needed to answer and reflect on the questions asked, players failed to learn what the terms meant on their own. Otara et al. (2019) insinuate and confirm that learners would struggle without a certain set of linguistic skills prior to the implementation of learner-centred pedagogies. In these scenarios, players 'needed guidance on subjects or concepts that they have no idea of' (Log 4 - 04/12/2020). Despite promoting a learner-centred environment where knowledge is solely created from the learner, in these cases, it is recommended that educators facilitate and help their learners grasp the basics prior to the use and implementation of learner-centred pedagogies (Altinyelken, 2011).

4.3.3 The direct impact of a competitive environment on learner-centred pedagogies

Both collaborative and inquiry-based learning were difficult to deem successful when implemented in a competitive-centred atmosphere. The players' attitudes towards learner-centred pedagogies completely changed when exposed to a competitive environment. It was observed that when introducing competition during an activity in session 5, 'all the things that players learnt through this process completely went out of the window' (Log 10 - 11/12/2020). Players were only focused on winning and not thinking it through when it came to game analysis. Moreover, learners also avoided working in teams and mostly played individually. In fact, some players were refusing to work and communicate with their teammates and instead dribbled independently (Session 8). Headley-Cooper (2010) explains this phenomenon by stating that athletes will prioritise winning over anything else and thus, will do anything they can to achieve this goal, even if it includes working individually and ignoring their teammates. Therefore, the players here valued the prospect of winning more than the concept of working in a team.

Apart from competitive scenarios throughout the session, competitive league games also affected the learner's attitude and reaction towards collaborative learning and group work. Before the start of session 7, players seemed to be filled with tension and restlessness. Moreover, these feelings towards game day directly affected the way the session was perceived by the players (Session 8). High ability players showed reluctance to participate in the activities as they were irritated with other players that were struggling and not performing properly. They were not working with the other players and were excluding the '*beginners*' by leaving them out of discussions and

passing formations (Session 7). As a matter of fact, a player requested to change the groupings by putting the better players together. When asked for the reason behind such a request, it emerged that players believed that collaboration between players of the same ability level would be more effective as a preparation for the game (Session 7). Another set of players also showed their annoyance during the session and complained of wasting precious time that should be focused on game strategies as opposed to helping the beginners (Session 8). Players would rather win and get a good result rather than going through the learning process that entails competition in such a game, which could be one of the reasons why some players were acting this way (Romar, Sarén & Hastie, 2016). Players wanted immediate results and showed little patience towards their own and others' learning process. Despite the fact that throughout the study high ability players were comfortable participating in heterogeneous collaborative learning, due to the imminent pressure of competition, they disregarded working with others of different abilities and saw it as a burden. This finding strengthens the arguments put forward by Monk-Turner and Payne (2005) who state that high ability learners dislike being grouped with other learners that do not keep up with them.

The looming stress of game day also affected my own approach in implementing learner-centred pedagogies. In Log 16 (18/12/2020) and Log 18 (05/01/2021), the feeling was that game day content needed to be prioritised over athlete-centred content. There was not enough time to use questions as a 'teaching tool with the amount of things I had to do before the game the next day' (Log 16 - 18/12/2020). It also felt like there would be 'time wasted by asking them questions as opposed to staying on task and work on different game strategies' (Log 18 - 05/01/2021). This was due to the pressure of winning the game the next day which according to

Headley-Cooper (2010) is a setback that coaches face especially when they are being pressured to win by the administration of the club.

4.4 Using learner-centred pedagogies with groups comprising mixed-ability learners

4.4.1 Accommodating a mixed-ability group

Various academics state that learner-centred pedagogies have been proven to help any educator in accommodating learners of diverse abilities within the same cohort (Lee et al., 2017). However, the educator must thoroughly think of the adaptations needed to be done during the implementation phase in order to make the accommodation possible. In the first log, various ways were thought through to make sure that all learners would be able to participate in a learner-centred environment comprising players in possession of different abilities. I maintained that I should be 'prepared for anything and to adapt according to the situation' (Log 1 - 25/11/2021). Additionally, questioning and grouping strategies should meet the players' needs in order to make sure that they gain knowledge from such an experience (Log 1 - 25/11/2021). Powell and Kalina (2009) emphasise the importance of meeting the learners' needs by referring to Piaget's cognitive development process, stating that learning is different for everyone.

In session 1, there was one scenario in which it was noticed that in order to explain the concept of teamwork through passing, more than one method had to be used in order to make sure that players understood what was asked of them. Some players immediately managed to understand the objectives and questioning, however other

players required further assistance through different demonstration techniques (Session 1). Tobin and Tippett's (2014) study also concurs with this finding as they stated that when educators used differentiated techniques with their players to teach the same curriculum, all students managed to understand and learn the content being taught. Whilst planning for the sessions which followed, the same questions were created, however in different formats. For example in session 4, I asked the players 'What do you have to do when your teammate is in possession of the ball and marked?'. Additionally, I also prepared the question: 'What do you need to do when your teammate has the ball and is finding it difficult to pass to an open player?'. This was done to make sure that all players could answer any principal question asked, by adjusting and simplifying the question format (Log 5 - 05/12/2020). The concept of facilitating questions and varying question complexity for the players was also introduced. By creating facilitating questions that are varied in level when it comes to difficulty, '[these] would allow a mixed-capable group to reflect and answer the question at their own pace, making it applicable to mixed-ability learning' (Log 8 - 08/12/2020). This was corroborated through the plan and implementation of Session 5 main activity 2 when asking the sub-question: 'How can you trick/make it difficult for the opponent in a 2v1 situation?' to facilitate the main question: 'In a 2v1 situation, why is it important to constantly move into space?' Some players managed to answer the main question only after being presented with the additional facilitating questions. This elicited data overlaps with the theory of zone of proximal development, where educators must identify what learners can do individually versus when they need facilitation (Vygotsky, 1978 cited by Avgousti, 2017). Hence, this is why it was important as an educator like myself, to create scenarios and questions that tackle the learners' individual ability, as well as aid them throughout the process whenever

they get stuck. Some questions were targeted so that players learn and make connections individually, while other questions had the intention of guiding them.

Nevertheless, creating accommodations to coach through a learner-centred approach with a mixed-able group sometimes proved to be difficult. This is due to the mentioned pre-requisites learners need to have prior to learning through a learner-centred approach (Otara et al., 2019). One needs to consider that different learners may not all have the basics necessary to learn through these methods. Furthermore, the educator has to make sure that all players are being catered for during the session, and during a session that might be complex and challenging, this may not always be possible. When planning and implementing challenging sessions, educators may not keep up with player demands and would end up providing less guidance to certain players of high ability so as to pay more attention to the struggling players. Having more than one component to focus on, whether it be the session content or making sure that all players understood, proved to be a difficult task (Log 3 - 04/12/020).

4.4.2 Grouping methods in a mixed-ability player environment

A factor which contributed to helping in implementing learner-centred pedagogies with mixed-ability players was the way they were grouped throughout the sessions. Heterogenous grouping was a major aspect that contributed to the creation of a learner-centred environment where players learned both individually and with others. In Log 4 (04/12/2020), I focused my reflective writing on the fact that players who understood and were more capable than others were teaming up with the beginner players and helping such players practice what was being done during the session. A particular player who had only just started attending the sessions, found ample help

from more experienced and capable players, like for example with passing combinations that we were practising at the time (Session 3). Upon reflection, such more capable players might have felt responsible to help this player, giving herself a role and objective to work with her new teammate. This opposes what Monk-Turner and Payne (2005) state, where they identify that better players may not want to work in groups as it does not aid them in any way. However, this was also observed in this study when during Session 7, a scenario emerged where more capable players complained about how the other new players were preventing them from moving on with the activity. However, when they were given the opportunity to help their teammates through communicating corrections and feedback, these players reacted better and stopped complaining when placed in heterogeneous settings. Here, the positive effects of heterogeneous grouping were seen as 'different abled players were helping one another in learning new skills' (Log 14 - 15/12/2020). These benefits are highlighted by Monk-Turner and Payne (2005) who suggest that role distribution for learners of high abilities help combat the notion of high-ability players not wanting to participate in collaborative learning.

According to Erkens et al. (2016), heterogeneous grouping in a mixed-ability environment also allows for the exchange of different ideas, opinions, and perspectives. During Session 3, different heterogeneous groupings were experimented with, where approximately after every two minutes, the partner or group that the players were working in was changed. This was done to expose the players to different perspectives and ideas on how to solve and participate in the activity itself (Log 6 - 05/12/2020). In fact, in Log 8 (08/12/2020) I stated that the change in group members was 'allowing the players to be exposed to different abilities and mindsets' and 'heterogeneous grouping allows ideas to flourish more' (Log 5 - 05/12/2020).

This was also well received by the players as they noticed that being grouped with different people helped them be exposed to 'more than one way of tackling a 2v1 situation from multiple points of views' (Log 14 - 15/12/2020). Østergaard (2016) acknowledge that learners working in diverse groups are exposed to other learners' perspectives when tackling an exercise. Additionally, these kinds of groupings helped in the questioning scenarios. During questioning, players were seen urging and motivating each other to reflect and answer questions in an appropriate manner. Players were also learning from each other's reflections and responses, while also having the opportunity to implement their new learning into practice. This, according to Østergaard (2016), is the best way to solve problems and learn. Nevertheless, there were still some activities where better players were not comfortable working with players of a lower ability. In Log 16 (18/12/2020), I disclosed how players got 'frustrated when they received inadequate passes or when not supported by teammates'. Several players were also seen showing agitated non-verbal actions such as stomping or opening their arms in expiration when a beginner player performed a skill badly (Session 8). This frustration drastically increased when working with all the group at once, fully exposing each player to the different abilities of others. The bigger the heterogeneous groups were, the more challenging it was to handle and meet all the individuals' needs. In such situations, I exclaimed that it was impossible to 'facilitate learning for all of the players without leaving anyone out' (Log 17 - 22/12/2020). An abundance of literature articulates that large group sizes prevented educators from properly implementing and using learner-centred pedagogies like inquiry-based learning as inquiry was impossible to use with all of the group (Mtika & Gates, 2010).

While this study comprised mainly of heterogeneous groupings and pairings, homogenous grouping in a mixed-ability environment was also put to the test. Contrary to the research found which mostly suggested avoiding same-ability clustering (Dillenbourg & Jermann, 2007), homogenous grouping had some positive attributes as well that indirectly benefited a mixed-ability setting (Log 8 - 08/12/2020). A few players improved more, regardless of ability, when paired with other players of the same ability as opposed to being grouped with different abilities. When grouping the players homogeneously during Session 4, a huge development in the language used in discussion between players of advanced ability was noted. When asking these players why they do not usually talk or respond in the manner that they were currently discussing, one player answered that the other players of lower ability would not have been able to understand. Furthermore, same-ability groupings also allowed the less capable players to work at their own pace. In comparison to when these players were intermingled with players of higher ability, lower ability players discussed and answered more openly and freely when participating in a homogenous group. When reflecting on this it was noted that these players were more comfortable speaking to others with the same ability, as they did not fear that the other players would judge them if they did something wrong (Log 8 - 08/12/2020). However, heterogeneous grouping was still the preferred method of grouping players. Johnson and Johnson (1989) agree with this preference as learners are more likely to learn from heterogeneous groups versus homogenous groups. The favoured use of heterogeneous grouping over homogenous grouping was identified when same ability groups struggled to compete in an exercise where one homogenous group was always more powerful than the other homogenous group (Session 6). Stercehele

(2015) verifies that grouping in a homogenous manner creates unfair competition while making winning pointless.

4.5 Maximising learning through the simultaneous incorporation of inquiry-based and collaborative learning methods

When setting the task of using both inquiry-based and collaborative learning in this study, the intention was to combine the two methodologies and to merge them together. In Log 1 (25/11/2020) I thought that 'it was going to be easy to integrate inquiry-based and collaborative learning techniques because of their shared atmosphere for learning'. Otara et al. (2019) agree with this belief as both inquiry-based and collaborative learning fall under the same bracket. Initially, both methodologies were integrated by creating aims in sessions that could be tackled by questioning and through collaboration (Log 3 - 04/12/2020). Questioning was used as a driving force to promote collaboration. In fact during Session 1, a question that related to teammate support was used to endorse collaboration. Players had to analyse the best way to support their teammates by reflecting on what was asked of them. In Session 2, questioning was used to teach and implement collaborative elements in an environment that was conducive to teamwork. Questioning could help the players understand collaboration and collaborative elements further, creating a stepping stone for learning from one method to another. In fact, Piaget's cognitive development theories promote this concept where questioning can be used to simulate student understanding on any topic (Schweisfurth, 2011). Similarly, but

focusing on learner collaboration, Duit (1998) stated that it provokes the creation of knowledge amongst members of a community.

Questioning was also being used and encouraged by the players themselves. Initially, players would observe and understand the way I was questioning their teammates and how questioning helped their teammates reflect and succeed in learning. This positive and desirable behaviour, in turn, was reciprocated by the players themselves as to produce the same aid and success for their teammates. In a way, I was modelling this desirable behaviour. As a matter of fact, when players noticed their teammates struggling, they would also ask them questions to provoke their thinking skills as opposed to telling them directly what they had to do (Session 5). This aligns with Vygotsky's beliefs that when people collaborate, they give their contribution and slowly start scaffolding knowledge, letting each individual involved constantly advance from one level of knowledge to the next (Powell & Kalina, 2009). This was encouraged throughout the study, as players were actively learning through self-reflection and analysis while also creating a collaborative learning atmosphere through questioning one another (Log 6 - 05/12/2020).

Besides using questioning as a resource to learn about collaboration, each session involved activities that contained attributes that promoted reflection from questioning and collaboration. In session 4, when giving instructions for the warmup (Figure 4.5.1), players only knew that the dodgers had to be hit, but not how. At the time, players were not aware that they could team up and work together to knock out as many players as possible. Through questioning, the role of the hitter was emphasised and the players were made aware that they could work together to corner the dodgers.

Create a square grid with the markers depending on the number of players you have.	
Each player must have a ball, however, only 3 players will start with the ball. The rest of the balls have to be out of the area.	
The three players with the ball are called hitters, whereas the remaining players who start in the area scattered throughout the grid are the dodgers.	
The hitters aim to try and hit as many dodgers as they can with the ball at foot, while the dodgers try to avoid them.	
Once a dodger is hit, they must get a ball from out of the area and become a hitter.	
The last player standing wins.	

Figure 4.5.1- Session 4: Warm up (Hitters and Dodgers)

The true potential of these incorporated methods and how they clearly maximised learning through the combination of questioning and collaboration (Log 8 - 08/12/2020), was clearly evident as the study progressed. Bell, Urhahne, Schanze & Ploetzner (2010) also correspond their results with these findings by stating that when combining these methodologies, players' motivation and interest in learning increased. Moreover, in another activity done in session 5, questioning was used to emphasise the importance and use of teamwork in an adapted version of the activity 'Lions and Tigers' (Refer to Figure 4.5.2).

Progression:	
Start calling up two numbers, turning it into a 2v2.	
Finally, call up the numbers, finishing off with a 3v3 scenario. In both these situations, emphasise the importance of supporting at an angle and helping their teammates.	

Figure 4.5.2 -Session 5: Progression of Main activity 1 (Lions and Tigers)

The variation implemented during this activity highly encouraged the players to work in a team while reflecting on game situation concepts through questioning focused on tactical aspects of the game. During this activity, through questioning, players were reminded of the value of working together while simultaneously reflecting on the best strategy to use and implement to overcome their opponents (Log 10 - 11/12/2020). When encouraging players to use these skills constantly in training, there is an increased chance that players would use these skills during a real football match, which in turn, would increase the likelihood of a great performance (Headley-Cooper, 2010).

While activities that were both conducive to inquiry-based and collaborative learning were created and implemented, some skills required activities that focused more on individual work. Certain skill sets like dribbling and shooting made it challenging to create a collaborative environment. In fact, when reflecting on an activity in Session 2, it was a struggle to intertwine the two methods due to the nature of the exercise as well as the level of understanding players had at the time (Log 4 - 04/12/2020). I noticed that at the beginning of learning a new skill, coaches should focus more on individual practice. Therefore, it made more pedagogical sense to use an 'individualistic questioning regime' (Log 4 - 04/12/2020). With these findings, Piaget's view of constructivism which emphasises that learners should primarily, actively learn through an active process on their own made more sense (Powell & Kalina, 2009). This is important as the players should already have some knowledge themselves before building up on this knowledge and sharing it with others, which is what Vygotsky's theory of scaffolding refers to (Vygotsky, 1962 as cited by Powell & Kalina, 2009). Intertwining the methodologies also became a problem whenever players did not understand what was expected of them. Despite emphasising the use of

teamwork as well as reflection and analysis through questioning, players in Session 7 were not able to complete one of the exercises. Particularly, players were not ‘thinking through the perspective of the whole team to answer why it was important to keep position and how keeping the position required a team effort’ (Log 14 - 15/12/2020). Therefore, although inquiry-based collaborative learning is desirable, its use does not automatically mean successful learning in every scenario.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed several aspects which directly correlate to the research questions presented at the beginning of chapter one. The findings of this study confirm that learner-centred pedagogies positively influence learning in players by promoting the development of cognitive, social, and interpersonal skills. Still, some challenges were experienced when implementing these learner-centred pedagogies in a club environment. Such challenges included time restrictions coaches might have and the drastic effects of competition on learner-centred pedagogies. Another challenge worth mentioning was that prior knowledge was needed in order to implement learner-centred pedagogies; such as the player’s basic understanding when it came to the content and concepts being tackled, knowledge on how to learn through these methods prior to implementation and heightened vocabulary skills. Moreover, the necessary accommodations to implement learner-centred pedagogies with players of different abilities, including the type of grouping, were discussed. These included adaptations and variations to each planned activity. As for the methods used, multiple strategies were considered and discussed on how best to mutually employ inquiry-based and collaborative techniques in order to amplify players’ learning.

Many of the results were consistent with previous studies carried out in relation to the topic of this study. However, some outcomes that emerged from this study were surprising and not regularly mentioned in the available literature. Lastly, Chapter 5 will include a summary of the findings along with the limitations that, I, the researcher, came across throughout the process of this study. Suggestions for further studies will also be discussed.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Purpose of the study

The use of inquiry-based and collaborative learning strategies was explored in this study. These pedagogies were utilised and applied in order to better understand the research questions posed at the beginning of this study. The primary aim of this study was to apply learner-centred strategies and understand their application from an educator's perspective while discovering how these can impact player learning. A focus on how these pedagogies can be implemented with mixed-ability groups also aided the practitioner-researcher in better understanding the applicable use of such pedagogies. Moreover, the effectiveness of using both inquiry-based and collaborative learning methods mutually to amplify learning was also investigated.

5.2 Methods and procedure

Twelve players forming a group of players within one football nursery were selected via convenience sampling. The players were female and aged between ten and twelve years. These players possessed a range of mixed abilities.

This study took on a qualitative approach and made use of three research methodologies through an action research approach, where I, the researcher, took on a dual role of researcher and practitioner to implement this study through several steps. The nine session plans created for this study were put to practice and were used to analyse the use of these strategies in a well-known context to the practitioner-researcher. The players' reactions towards the implementation of these methods were also of importance and duly noted. Unstructured observations were used to record the behaviours exhibited by the players when exposed to learner-centred pedagogies. Therefore a total of nine unstructured observations took place, and these were

recorded through field notes. To complement the data collected through session plan creation and observations, a journal was also kept to obtain an in-depth analysis of what was observed from the educator's point of view through evaluative reflective writing. A total of eighteen journal entries were written in a dated organised format. Through the prior knowledge I had obtained from coaching and working with the players prior to the commencement of the study, I had ample knowledge of their abilities. This, in turn, proved to be useful as this helped make sure that I, the researcher, could create session plans using a learner-centred model to fit the needs of all the players. Additionally, this knowledge was also helpful as it allowed the researcher, myself, to compare and contrast the players' behaviours and learning throughout the study.

To extract results collected from data gathered, the observation notes and the journal entries were analysed through thematic analysis. Codes were extracted from the data collected and then grouped into different categories. From these categories, the major themes from the data collection emerged.

5.3 Major findings

Four main themes emerged from the analysed data. These four themes were learner-centred pedagogies' positive influence on player learning; drawbacks presented when implementing learner-centred pedagogies; using learner-centred pedagogies with mixed ability players, and maximising learning through the simultaneous use of inquiry-based and collaborative learning methods.

From the data amassed, learner-centred pedagogies did in fact positively affect the players' learning in various domains. Players were exposed to a motivational player-

centred learning environment and in this environment, the players honed and developed mainly cognitive and social skills. Players showed a massive improvement in using critical thinking, decision making and problem-solving skills. Moreover, the players also learned about interpersonal skills like communication, leadership, and active listening. This study allowed the players to realise that mastery of the abovementioned skills is vital towards their development and growth as a football player.

Apart from the mentioned advantages, some disadvantages relating to these pedagogies were also noticed. Time was one of the main hindrances, especially when it came to personal time management in creating and implementing the sessions. Furthermore, it was also noted that because of the time management issues encountered during sessions, there was also a decrease in physical engagement during training. There were also some problems concerning the lack of knowledge that players had prior to exposure to these methods. Players who did not have the essential know how to respond to these pedagogies, found it more difficult to participate during the sessions. Lastly, it is important to note that the introduction of competitive environments negatively impacted the implementation of these methods as players were more focused on the short-term goal of winning rather than long-term learning.

This study also confirmed that it was not always challenging to use these kinds of pedagogies with a mixed-ability group. It was always important to include different variations and adaptations to all the exercises, to make sure that each player's need was provided for. Furthermore, creating groups of mixed-ability players during the exercises positively benefitted everyone within the group. When players were grouped heterogeneously, they exposed one another to different perspectives and

viewpoints regarding the game. Additionally, players helped one another improve their skills when in mixed groups. However, there were some instances where high-ability players refused to participate with less-abled players due to frustration. Here, high-ability players prompted the use of homogenous grouping in some of the situations during the sessions. Surprisingly, despite what most of the research states, some positive attributes also arose from grouping players according to ability in a mixed-ability environment; some of which included the advancement of tactical knowledge and understanding for the better players, as well as a more comfortable and less demanding atmosphere for the beginner players to engage with. Nonetheless, heterogeneous grouping in mixed-ability environments was still the preferred grouping method.

How to intertwine inquiry-based and collaborative learning methods was also delved into. Various strategies concerning the mutual use of the abovementioned methods were implemented in practice. The most commonly used strategy included the use of questioning to promote collaboration and vice-versa. Specifically, some examples include the concept of questioning players to reflect about aspects of collaboration as well as using collaboration and teamwork to promote group reflection originating from players' questions.

5.4 Limitations

While the implementation of this study was a success, there were still some limitations that were recognised when evaluating the research process itself. Researchers need to be aware of their study's limitations as these affect the collection and analysis of the data gathered (Ionnidis, 2007). These limitations are discussed hereunder.

This study went through some restructuring to make sure that the research could be conducted, due to the unforeseen circumstances that arose because of the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes directly affected the process to obtain ethical clearance for this study whereby the process had to be re-completed to amend the forms and to reflect the new changes applied to the study. This, in turn, delayed the process of data collection. Furthermore, the changes also impacted the way I projected the pedagogies. Considering that the participant sample changed, my way of approaching the implementation of these pedagogies also had to change to satisfy the new cohort of learners. While the pedagogies remained the same, I had to adapt my decision making with regards to the implementation of such pedagogies; shifting from a teacher perspective to a coach perspective.

Another limitation worth mentioning is the ethical issue presented when taking on a dual role; that of researcher and practitioner. I found difficulty in distinguishing myself in times where I had to be a coach and times where I had to be a researcher. There were times where I prioritised being a coach over a researcher and vice-versa. Additionally, knowing the participants prior to the study may have affected the player's understanding of the study. I noticed that some of the participants did not care nor read the information letter given, due to how trusting they were towards myself, which could have affected their understanding of what the study entailed.

5.5 Recommendations for further studies

Multiple studies can be done to uncover additional knowledge regarding the topic being discussed in this research study. Considering the small participant sample, as well as obtaining one educator's perspective for this study, several recommendations

for further studies will need to be discussed that would contribute to further understanding the use of learner-centred pedagogies in local football clubs.

One idea is to comparably conduct this study with young male football players, as some research states that there is a difference related to gender when it comes to behaviour and reception vis-à-vis the use of learner-centred pedagogies with male learners.

Furthermore, a local intervention study can be conducted with a number of coaches in order to promote the use of learner-centred pedagogies. Additionally, such a study can take on a quantitative approach by getting an increased number of perspectives; from both coaches and players, on how learner-centred pedagogies affect their training regimes as well as their holistic development. This kind of data would help in obtaining a broader view of learners and educators.

5.6 Conclusions

The results acquired from this study attempt to answer the research questions in terms of: whether learner-centred pedagogies positively influence player learning; whether it was challenging using these pedagogies with mixed-ability players; and how to mutually utilise these pedagogies to maximise learning. The study shows that these pedagogies did in fact positively encourage player learning. However, some drawbacks still presented themselves which related to the playing environment that football coaches and players work in. Furthermore, the positive influence on player learning was also observable when using these pedagogies within a mixed-ability group, since players flourished and learned from one another in a heterogenous setting throughout the course of this study. Taking this into consideration, the

incorporation of inquiry-based and collaborative techniques allowed players to develop their cognitive, social and interpersonal skills through questioning for collaboration and collaborating towards inquiry.

In summary, I would suggest and inspire more coaches to use these learner-centred pedagogies when coaching their players. With the help of these techniques, players can grow holistically through a learner-centred environment which enables them to develop and implement skills such as critical thinking, decision making, communication and teamwork in practice, whether it be on the football pitch or in the real world.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Permission letter to the club president.

Permission Letter to Football Club President

Re: Learner-centred pedagogies: implementing inquiry-based and collaborative strategies in a football nursery.

Dear Mr/Mrs,

I am Leona Vella and I am conducting a research study under the supervision of Dr Karl Attard. I would like to request permission to conduct my research within your club. I am writing this letter to request permission to conduct this research study as part of my postgraduate studies at the University of Malta, at your club. The research study is about learner-centred methods, specifically inquiry-based and group work, and how these methods affect participant learning. Activities will be taught using these methods, will be implemented during training sessions. This research is part of the Master's in Teaching and Learning in Physical Education course, from the Faculty of Education.

Should you grant me permission to conduct my study at your club, one whole group of participants would be selected to be coached and will be asked to attend training sessions at the club, for nine sessions during a period of three weeks. This group will be having training sessions that are 60- 75 minutes long, planned out and coached by myself. These sessions will consist of activities that promote inquiry and collaborative learning by using a learner-centred learning approach. Participants must be actively involved during the sessions by completing tasks given by the researcher that will help them learn information through questioning skills as well as from their peers during group work. I will be observing the participant throughout the training session. The data collected from the observations will be taken using a field note format, where notes will be written throughout the observation about the participant's reactions to the tasks given to them. The observations will be done in an anonymous manner where notes taken will not mention any of the participants' names. Additionally, I will also be developing a reflective journal and note the participants' contributions and reactions to inquiry-based and group work methodologies. This

reflective journal will be completed after each session, describing the evaluation of the lesson from start to finish.

Participants who do not give consent to participate in the study will still have to participate during the sessions just the same as their peers, but no data will be collected from these students. The identity of the participants and the club will be kept confidential, and all data collected will be anonymised. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participants can withdraw from the study at any time without suffering any consequences. However, your club's participation in this study will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on:

leona.vella.16@um.edu.mt

My supervisor for this research study is Dr Karl Attard:

karl.attard@um.edu.mt

Thank you for your time. Yours faithfully,

Leona Vella

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Leona Vella', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Appendix 2: Permission letter to head coach.

Permission Letter to Head Coach

Re: Learner-centred pedagogies: implementing inquiry-based and collaborative strategies in a football nursery.

Dear Mr/Mrs.,

I am Leona Vella and I am conducting a research study under the supervision of Dr Karl Attard. I would like to request permission to conduct my research within your club. I am writing this letter to request permission to conduct this research study as part of my postgraduate studies at the University of Malta, at your club. The research study is about learner-centred methods, specifically inquiry-based and group work, and how these methods affect participant learning. Activities will be taught using these methods, will be implemented during training sessions. This research is part of the Master's in Teaching and Learning in Physical Education course, from the Faculty of Education.

Should you grant me permission to conduct my study at your club, one whole group of participants would be selected to be coached and will be asked to attend training sessions at the club, for nine sessions during a period of three weeks. This group will be having training sessions that are 60- 75 minutes long, planned out and coached by myself. These sessions will consist of activities that promote inquiry and collaborative learning by using a learner-centred learning approach. Participants must be actively involved during the sessions by completing tasks given by the researcher that will help them learn information through questioning skills as well as from their peers during group work. I will be observing the participant throughout the training session. The data collected from the observations will be taken using a field note format, where notes will be written throughout the observation about the participant's reactions to the tasks given to them. The observations will be done in an anonymous manner where notes taken will not mention any of the participants' names. Additionally, I will also be developing a reflective journal and note the participants' contributions and reactions to inquiry-based and group work methodologies. This

reflective journal will be completed before and after each session, describing the evaluation of the lesson from start to finish.

Additionally, I would ask you to act as the intermediary for the distribution of the information letters and consent/assent forms to participants and their parents/guardians.

Participants who do not give consent to participate in the study will still have to participate during the sessions just the same as their peers, but no data will be collected from these students. The identity of the participants and the club will be kept confidential, and all data collected will be anonymised. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participants can withdraw from the study at any time without suffering any consequences. However, your club's participation in this study will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on:

leona.vella.16@um.edu.mt

My supervisor for this research study is Dr Karl Attard:

karl.attard@um.edu.mt

Thank you for your time. Yours faithfully,

Leona Vella

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Leona Vella', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Appendix 3: Participant information letter (English version)

Participant Information Letter

Dear Participant,

I am Leona Vella, a University of Malta student, who is currently doing a study to learn more about how children learn during a football training session with questions and group work activities. I would like to invite you to help me out with this study. In order to do this, you are invited to participate in normal football training sessions.

All sessions will be coached by myself for nine training sessions. Additionally, during these sessions, I would like to carry out some observations and take notes during the sessions. In all the sessions, you are going to be with your teammates and never on your own.

Your name will not be put on any papers written about this project. If you decide to help with this project but then change your mind, you can stop helping at any time, without any negative consequences.

Attached to this letter, please find an assent form. I kindly ask you to sign this assent form if you wish to participate in this study. If possible, the signed assent form should be returned a week from receiving it. If you decide not to sign the assent form, you will not be part of this study.

If you have any questions about this letter, do not hesitate to contact me through my email:

leona.vella.16@um.edu.mt

I will be more than glad to help and explain.

Thanks,

Leona Vella



Appendix 4: Participant information letter (Maltese version)

Ittra ta' informazzjoni għall-parteċipant

Għeżiež parteċipant,

Jiena jisimni Leona Vella, studenta' mill-universita' ta' Malta, u bħallissa qiegħda nagħmel studju fuq kif it-tfal jitgħallmu waqt sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ tal-futbal permezz ta' mistqosijiet u attivitajiet ta' kollaborazzjoni. Jiena nixtieq nistiednek biex tgħini f'dan l-istudju. Biex tgħini f'dan l-istudju, inti mistieden biex tipparteċipa sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ tal-futbal.

Inti se tipparteċipa f'disa sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ tal-futbal. Is- sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ tal-futbal kollha ħa jkunu mgħallma minni. Waqt dawn sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ, jiena nixtieq nosservak u nieħu xi noti. Fis- sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ kollha, inti ħa tkun ma' sħabek tal-futbal u qatt m'hu se tkun waħdek.

Ismek mhux ħa jkun miktub fuq l-ebda karti jew dokumenti ta' dan il-proġett. Jekk inti tiddeċidi tgħin f'dan il proġett iżda f'daqqa waħda tiddeċidi li ma tridx tipparteċipa, tista' tieqaf meta trid mingħajr ma' jkollok konsegwenzi negattivi.

Mehmuz ma' din l-ittra, ħa ssib il-formola ta' kunsens. Nistaqsik sabiex timla din il-formola jekk inti tixtieq tipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju, Jekk huwa possibli, din il-formola ffirmata trid tirrotorna lura lejn l-klub ġimgħa wara li tkun irċivejta. Jekk inti tiddeċidi li ma tiffirmax il-formola ta' Kunsens, inti mhux se tagħmel parti minn dan l-istudju.

Jekk għandek xi mistoqsijiet jew ma fhimtx xi haga, ikkuntatjani fuq:

leona.vella.16@um.edu.mt

Jiena lesta ngħinek jew nfemek f'kwalunkwe parti ta' din l-ittra u ta' dan l-istudju

Grazzi tal-ħin tiegħek,

Leona Vella



Appendix 5: Parents/Guardians Information letter (English version)

Information letter to Parents/Guardians

Re: Learner-centred pedagogies: implementing inquiry-based and collaborative strategies in a football nursery.

Dear parent/guardian,

I am Leona Vella from the University of Malta, reading for a Masters' degree in Teaching and Learning in Physical Education. Your daughter is invited to participate in a research study that tackles two learner-centred teaching (inquiry-based and group work) methods, by focusing on the participants' own ability to complete tasks given to them by the researcher in this learner-centred format.

Sessions will be created and taught with activities involving the previously mentioned methods by myself. Observation notes will be taken by myself, and these can include information about how your daughter responds to different learning approaches. Your daughter will also be given an information letter, which gathers and explains all the information needed in order to understand the study taking place. Your daughter has the right to decide whether she would like to participate or not.

If your daughter participates, she is required to participate in nine football training sessions that will occur over a period of three weeks, as participants will have 3 sessions per week. These sessions are all taking place at the usual location. During these sessions, your daughter will be participating in inquiry-based (questions) and group work activities with other participants during the session. I will be observing the group during the session and collecting my data dependent on how the participants react and learn from activities that involve inquiry-based and group work. The data collected from the observations will be taken using a field note format, where notes will be written throughout the observation about the participants' reactions to the tasks given to them. The observations will be done in an anonymous manner where notes taken will not mention any of the participants' names, ensuring anonymity.

Your daughter's identity and that of the club will be confidential and all data collected will be anonymized. Your daughter's participation is voluntary. Your daughter may withdraw from the study at any time without suffering any negative consequences. Your daughter's participation will be greatly appreciated.

Attached to this letter, please find a consent form. I kindly ask you to sign this consent form to allow me to observe your daughter during the sessions. I kindly request that the signed consent form should be returned a week from receiving it. Participants who do not give consent to participate in the study will still have to participate during the sessions just the same as their peers, but no data will be collected from these participants.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

leona.vella.16@um.edu.mt

My supervisor for this research study is Dr. Karl Attard:

karl.attard@um.edu.mt

Thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully,

Leona Vella

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Leona Vella', written in a cursive style.

Appendix 6: Parents/Guardians Information letter (Maltese version)

Ittra ta' informazzjoni għall-ġenituri/gwardjani

Re: Pegagogiji ccentrati fuq min qed jiġi mgħallem: implimentazzjoni ta' strategija kollaborativa u l-inkjesta fi ħdan klub tal-futbol.

Għeżież ġenitur/gwardjan,

Jiena jsimini Leona Vella, studenta' mill-universita' ta' Malta, u qiegħda nagħmel grad ta' Masters fit-tagħlim tal-Edukazzjoni Fizika. It-tifla tiegħek hija mistiedna biex tieħu sehem f' riċerka fuq attivitajiet iċċentrati għat-tfal, spesifikament attivitajiet ta' inkjesta u kollaborazzjoni. Dawn il-metodi jinvolvu lill-parteciċipanti u kif jitgħallmu fl-klub tal-futbol. Dawn is-sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ ħa jiġu krejati u mgħallmin minni. Noti ta' osservazzjoni ha jiġu meħuda minni waqt dawn is-sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ u dawn jistgħu jinkludu informazzjoni fuq kif it-tifla tiegħek tirreaġixxi għall- metodi differenti tat-tagħlim. It-tifla tiegħek ħa tingħata wkoll ittra ta' informazzjoni, li tispjega dak kollu meħtieġa biex tifhem l-istudju li ħa tieħu sehem fih. It-tifla tiegħek għanda id-dritt li tiddeċiedi jekk tridx tipparteċipa jew le.

Jekk it-tifla tiegħek ħa tiddeċidi li tipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju hi trid taddendi disa' sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ tal-futbol li ħa jseħħu fuq perjodu ta' tlett ġimgħat, għaliex il-parteciċipanti ħa jkollhom tlett sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ matul il-ġimgħa. Dawn is-sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ ħa isiru kollha fil-post tas-soltu. Matul dawn Dawn is-sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ, it-tifla tiegħek se tieħu sehem f'attivitajiet ibbażati fuq l-inkjesta (mistoqsijiet) u kollaborazzjoni ma' parteciċipanti oħra.

Ħa nkun qiegħed nosserva l-parteciċipanti waqt is-sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ u niġbor id-dejta meħtieġa għall-istudju. Din id-dejta tiddependi minn kif jirreaġixxu l-parteciċipant u jitgħallmu mill-attivitajiet li jinvolvu xogħol ibbażat fuq inkjesta u xogħol fi grupp. Id-dejta miġbura minn dawn l-osservazzjonijiet ħa tiġi mehuda bi still ta' punti fejn jiena r-ricerkatura ha nara r-reazzjonijiet differenti tat-tfal għall-attivitajiet li ha jigu assenjati

lilhom. Dawn l-osservazzjonijiet ħa jigu mehuda b'mod anonimu fejn fl-ebda hin mu ħa jiġi msemmi l-isem tat-/tifla tiegħek, biex nassiguraw l-anonimita'.

L-identità tat-tifla tiegħek u dik tal-klub se jinżammu kunfidenzjali u d-dejta kollha miġbura se tkun anonimizżata. Il-parteċipazzjoni tat-tifla tiegħek hija volontarja. It-tifla tiegħek tista' jirtira mill-istudju fi kwalunkwe ħin mingħajr ma jsofri konsegwenzi negattivi. Il-parteċipazzjoni tat-tifla tiegħek hija apprezzata.

Mehmuz ma' din l-ittra, ħa ssib il-formola ta' Kunsens. Nistaqsik sabiex timla din il-formola jekk inti ttippermeti li nosserva lit-tifla tiegħek waqt dawn is-sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ. Jekk huwa possibili, il-formola ffirmata trid tiġi rritornata lej l-klub sa ġimgħa wara li tirċiviha. Il- parteċipanti xorta rridu jipparteċipaw matul il-lezzjonijiet bħal shabbhom anke jekk huma ma jagħtux kunsens li jipparteċipaw fl-istudju. Iżda, f'dan il każ, dejta mingħand parteċipanti li ma tgħawx kunsens ma jingabarx.

Jekk għandek xi mistoqsijiet, ibgħat jew ikuntatta lili:

leona.vella.16@um.edu.mt

Is-superviżer tiegħi għal dan l-istudju huwa Dr Karl Attard:

karl.attard@um.edu.mt

Grazzi tal-ħin tiegħek,

Leona Vella



Appendix 7: Participant Assent form (English version)

Participant Assent Form

Re: Learner-centred pedagogies: implementing inquiry-based and collaborative strategies in a football nursery.

If you want to help with this project and participate in this study, please fill in this form and return it to the club.

I, _____ (participant's name) have read the information letter provided and agree to be observed during some training sessions for the purposes of this study. I am aware that I will be attending nine football training sessions which will be planned and taught by the researcher (Ms. Leona Vella). I am aware that all data and my identity will be anonymized. I am aware that this is completely voluntary and if I decide to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no negative consequences.

Participant's Name _____

Participant's Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher's Name **Leona Vella**

Researcher's Email **leona.vella.16@um.edu.mt**

Researcher's Signature



Appendix 8: Participant Assent form (Maltese version)

Formola ta' Kunsens tal-partecipant,

Re: Pegagogiji ccentrati fuq min qed jiġi mgħallem: implimentazzjoni ta' strategija kollaborativa u l-inkjesta fi ħdan klub tal-futbol.

Jekk inti trid tgħin f'dan il-proġett u tipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju, jekk jogħġbok imla din il-formola u rritorna lura lill-klub.

Jiena, _____ (isem l-partecipant) qrajt l-informazzjoni provduta u naqbel li niġi osservata waqt sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ tal-futbol għall-iskop ta' dan l-istudju. Jiena naf li rrid nattendu disa' sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ tal-futbol li huma pjanati u mgħallmin mir-riċerkatura (Ms. Leona Vella). Jien naf li d-dejta miġbura u l-identita' tiegħi se tkun anonimiżzata. Jiena naf li dan l-istudju huwa kompletament volontarju u jekk niddecidi nirtira mill-istudju f'kwalunkwe ħin, m'hemmx se jkun hemm konsegwenzi neggattivi.

Isem l-partecipant

Firma tal- partecipant

Data

Isem ir-riċerkatura

Leona Vella

Imejl tar-riċerkatura

leona.vella.16@um.edu.mt

Firma tar-riċerkatura



Appendix 9: Parent/Guardian Consent form (English version)

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Re: Learner-centred pedagogies: implementing inquiry-based and collaborative strategies in a football nursery.

I, _____ (parent/guardian's name) have read the information letter provided and allow _____ (your daughter's name) to participate in this research study by being observed during training sessions. I am aware that my daughter will be attending nine football training sessions which will be planned and taught by the researcher. I am aware that all data will be kept confidential and will be anonymized. I am aware that this is completely voluntary and if my daughter decides to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no negative consequences, and data related to her will not be utilised in any way.

Parent/Guardian's Name _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher's Name **Leona Vella**

Researcher's Email **leona.vella.16@um.edu.mt**

Researcher's Mobile No.

Researcher's Signature



Appendix 10: Parent/Guardian Consent form (Maltese version)

Formola ta' kunsens għall-Ġenituri/Gwardjani tat-tfal

Re: Pegagogiji ccentrati fuq min qed jiġi mgħallem: implimentazzjoni ta' strategija kollaborativa u l-inkjesta fi ħdan klub tal-futbol.

Jiena, _____ (isem il- ġenitur/gwardjan) qrajt l- informazzjoni provduta u nħalli lil _____ (isem it-tifla) biex tipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju billi ikunu osservati waqt sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ tal-futbol. Jiena naf li it-tifla tiegħi se taddendi disa sessjonijiet ta' taħriġ tal-futbol li huma pjanati u mħgallmin mir-riċerkatura. Jiena naf li d-dejta se tinżamm kunfidenzjali u li ħa jkunu anonimiżżata. Jiena naf li dan l-istudju huwa kompletament volontarju. Jiena naf li mhux se jkun hemm konsegwenzi negattivi jekk it-tifel/tifla tiegħi tirtira f' kwalunkwe ħin minn dan l-istudju id-dejta relatata mat-tifla tiegħi mhux se tkun użata bl-ebda mod.

Isem il- ġenitur/gwardjan tat-tifla _____

Firma tal- ġenitur/gwardjan tat-tifla _____

Data _____

Isem ir-riċerkatura **Leona Vella**

Imejl tar-riċerkatura **leona.vella.16@um.edu.mt**

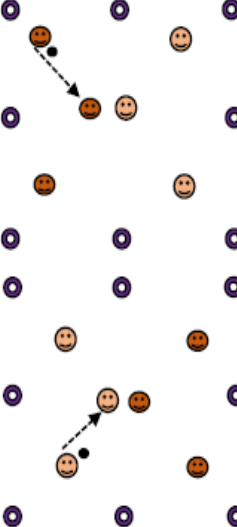
Numru tar-riċerkatura _____

Firma tar-riċerkatura



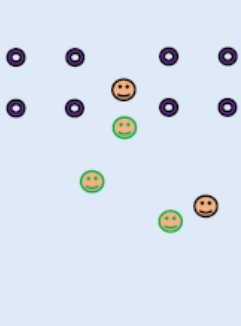
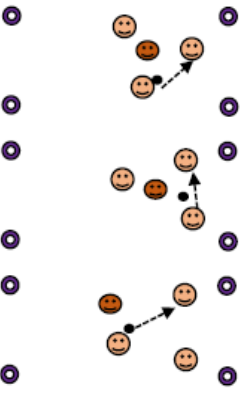
Appendix 11: Session Plan 1

Session no :	Age group:	Date:	Duration:	No. of players in the group:	Equipment needed:
1	U12's Female sector	1/12/2020	75 minutes	12	Footballs, Markers, Cones
Aims of the session: <i>To focus on keeping possession of the ball through football skills such as passing and dribbling as well as learning about using interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving.</i>					
Activities:	Description:	Diagram:	Coaching cues:		
Warm up game: <i>Dutch Square + Intro</i> <u>Duration: 15 minutes</u>	<p><i>(General specific warm-up and stretching done by players to promote empowerment)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set a square in the middle of the area to be used for exercise. Select 6 players to stay outside of the square, while 6 players stay on the inside. Players on the inside will have a ball each and will run around within the square created. Players on the inside have to find an open player on the outside and pass to, before receiving and finding someone else. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate with each other to avoid bumping as well as to call out whoever they want to pass.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyes up when running Communicate Find space 		
Main IBL/CL activity 1: <i>Gatekeepers</i> <u>Duration: 10 minutes</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create gates consisting of two markers around the area provided. Let players pair up by themselves Players have to partner up and have 2 minutes to discuss a strategy together on which gates to go through. Players have to go through the gates, once the coach claps, they have 1 minute to clear as many gates as they can. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow players to switch partners after every 2 rounds. Instead of passing the ball, the players have to volley the ball. Allow two players to roam freely and try to take other players balls. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and discuss together the best strategy through which gates to go through as fast as they can (problem-solving element)</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How did you discuss, together, as partners in which gates to pass through and why? ➤ Was it difficult to go through the gates at the same time as other player and why? ➤ Where do you think that you would use these dribbling skills during a real game? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyes up when running Communicate Find space 		
Main IBL/CL activity 2: <i>Building on colour</i> <u>Duration: 10 minutes</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an area and outline it with markers to indicate where players can do the exercise in. The group will be divided into two; representing two different colours; red and blue. Players wearing red have to pass to blue and players wearing blue have to pass to red. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add another colour so that it would be three groups: green pass to red pass to blue pass to green. Increase the number of balls within the area. Turn into a possession game with scoring where an amount of passes equals points. <p>Focus:</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyes up when running Communicate Find space 		

	<p>Players have to communicate and think on where they have to pass dependent on the situation at hand during the activity (problem-solving).</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What was an important element to this game that you had to do to ensure that you get a pass? ➤ Was it confusing to remember the colour combination? If yes, Why? ➤ Do you think that you can get a pass from that angle? (hide and seek tactic) 		
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 3: <u>3v3 possession game</u></p> <p><u>Duration: 10 minutes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an area and outline it with markers to indicate where players can do the exercise in. • There will be two areas where 4 groups will be working. • One group from each area will be wearing bibs. • Players have to keep possession of the ball by passing to another and call out the number of passes, once they reach 5 points they earn 1 point. • Another team has to press and intercept to take the ball and then keep it in their possession. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can increase or decrease the number of points depending on the ability level of children. ○ Can turn it into an adapted game where they stop the ball on the line. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and critically analyse the situation on what way to pass similar to the previous exercise while tackling the interpersonal skills within a real game scenario.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Why did your teammate not get or notice that you passed the ball to them? ➤ What elements do you think are important during this activity? ➤ From this activity, what could have both teams done better? (promoting inter related feedback) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyes up when running • Communicate • Find space
<p>Concluding activity and Circle time:</p> <p><u>Duration: 20 minutes (15 minutes gameplay/5 minutes stretching)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players will play a 6-aside between them where important outcomes learned in the session must be implemented within the game. • Here, 'FREEZE' moments can occur where the coach can pause the game, and question players about the current situation of play. Here, thinking and reasoning skills are tapped, where players have to reason their positioning, the way they are playing, and what they could have done better. • After the game, players do the cool-down stretching by themselves while the coach asks questions about what impacted them through the session, and the players have to reflect, answer explain why. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and critically analyse the situation on what best to pass similar to the previous exercise while tackling the interpersonal skills within a real game scenario.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the stretch for 20 seconds • Straight legs • Hold tight

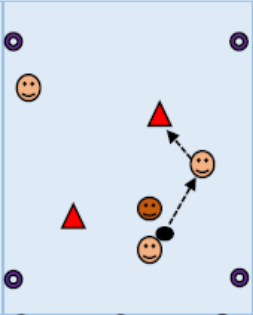
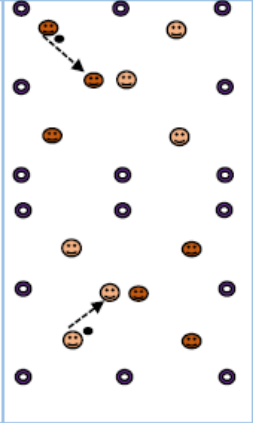
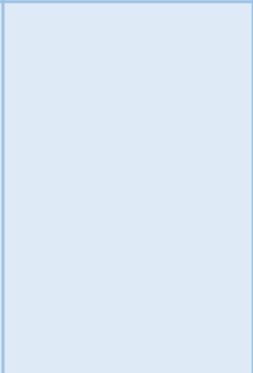
Appendix 12: Session Plan 2

Session no :	Age group:	Date:	Duration:	No. of players in the group:	Equipment needed:	
2	U12's Female sector	4/12/2020	75 minutes	12	Markers, Footballs	
Aims of the session: <i>To focus on keeping possession of the ball through football skills such as passing and interpersonal skills such as communication (emphasis on clear explanations and active listening), teamwork and problem-solving.</i>						
Activities:	Description:	Diagram:	Coaching cues:			
Warm up game: <i>British Bulldogs</i> + Intro <u>Duration:</u> 15 minutes	<p><i>(General specific warm-up and stretching done by players to promote empowerment)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise. One player will be selected as the tagger. The tagger will be in the middle of the area, and can only move sideways. The other players have to run from one side to another without getting caught by the tagger. <p>Focus: Players have to find empty spaces to pass through areas where the tagger is not present.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyes up when running Find space Change direction Change of speed. 			
Main IBL/CL activity 1: <i>Box placing</i> <u>Duration:</u> 15 minutes	<p><i>(This exercise will help build up and connect with the subsequent exercise within this plan)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create 12 small boxes (one for each player) with boxes having to be facing each other. Players will find a box each with half of the cohort having a ball and players are to partner up. Players will stay in boxes in front of each other, pass the ball to one another and stop the ball within the box. Players then should start on the side of the box and run in to receive and stop the ball. <p><u>Progression:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players pass the ball, and they become the defender. Whereas the player receiving has to attack and stop the ball within the box (which is more centred). <p><u>Variations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players have a ball each and have to pass at the same time while receiving the ball. Increasing or decreasing the distance between one box and another. <p>Focus: Players have to give clear explanations to each other on where the pass is received. When adding another ball, players have to multitask and problem-solve the best way to pass without losing the balls with their partner.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How do you present your body when waiting to receive it? ➤ How do you need to control the ball when receiving? ➤ Did your partner give a clear explanation? and if so how? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak clearly Eyes up when passing Pass into space 			
Main IBL/CL activity 2: <i>Box scoring</i> <u>Duration:</u> 10 minutes	<p><i>(This exercise will be built upon and connect with the previous exercise within this plan)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create 5 large boxes, with 4 being at the corner of the area and the last box being in the middle. Divide the group into two teams. (Start with a disadvantage with one of the teams). The two teams have to keep possession and stop the ball in one of the boxes within the area. Teams not in possession have to prevent the other team from stopping the ball within the area. <p><u>Progression:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players have to run into the box before receiving the ball, rather than waiting or dribbling through. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak clearly Listen to your teammates Pass into open space/player 			

	<p><u>Variations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input a passing system, where players have to complete 5 passes before finding a box. • Increase/Decrease the number of boxes. • Coach tells what box players have to go through (Can be coloured based). <p>Focus: Players have to actively listen to their teammates, especially teammates in possession of the ball, to assure that they are ready to receive or attack for the ball. Teammates also have to communicate clearly to discuss strategies and plan on the best way to tackle the situation.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is the best way to support a teammate when waiting to receive? (diagonal support) ➤ What does the team in possession need to do when they have the ball? ➤ When in possession of the ball, when do you think is the right time to pass the ball? 		
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 3: <u>3v1 possession</u></p> <p><u>Duration: 10 minutes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an area and outline it with markers to indicate where players can do the exercise in. • There will be three areas where 3 groups will be working. • Players have to keep possession of the ball by passing to another. • Another player (defender) has to press and intercept to take the ball. <p><u>Variations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can turn it into an adapted game where they stop the ball on the line. ○ Can include a point system <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and critically analyse the best strategy to pass the ball to their teammates (similar to the previous exercise) while tackling the interpersonal skills within a real game scenario.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To make it more difficult for the defender, what do you need to do when in possession of the ball? ➤ Why is it important for your teammates to call you when supporting you for the ball? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyes up when running • Communicate • Find space
<p>Concluding activity and Circle time:</p> <p><u>Duration: 20 minutes (15 minutes gameplay/5 minutes stretching)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players will play a 6-aside between them where important outcomes learned in the session must be implemented within the game. • Here, 'FREEZE' moments can occur where the coach can pause the game, and question players about the current situation of play. Here, thinking and reasoning skills are tapped, where players have to reason their positioning, the way they are playing, and what they could have done better. • After the game, players do the cool-down stretching by themselves while the coach asks questions about what impacted them through the session, and the players have to reflect, answer explain why. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and critically analyse the situation on what best to pass similar to the previous exercise while tackling the interpersonal skills within a real game scenario.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the stretch for 20 seconds • Straight legs • Hold tight

Appendix 13: Session Plan 3

Session no :	Age group:	Date:	Duration:	No. of players in the group:	Equipment needed:
3	U12's Female sector	05/12/2020	75 minutes	12	Footballs, Markers and Cones
Aims of the session: <i>To focus on keeping possession of the ball through football skills such as passing and interpersonal skills such as communication (emphasis on clear explanations and active listening), teamwork and problem-solving.</i>					
Activities:	Description:	Diagram:	Coaching cues:		
Warm up game: <i>Octopus tag + Intro</i> <u>Duration:</u> 15 minutes	<p><i>(General specific warm-up and stretching done by players to promote empowerment)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise. Players are given a marker each to hold in hand. One player will be selected as the octopus tagger. The 'octopus' has to try and tag other players with their markers. Once caught, the other players become part of the octopus and must connect markers and continue running till only one player is caught. <p>Focus: Players have to find empty spaces to avoid being tagged by the tagger. The tagged 'octopus players' have to work together and communicate the best strategies to tag their other teammates.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyes up when running Find space Change direction Change of speed. 		
Main IBL/CL activity 1: <i>Crossover</i> <u>Duration:</u> 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For this exercise, the small goalposts will be used. Area to be divided in half or quarters (using the whole pitch). Each area will have 3 players. Player has to position themselves next to each other at a distance, with the left and right players standing in front of the middle player. The sequence of passing will go as so: middle player dribbles the ball to the right side and passes to the right player, right player dribbles to the middle then left and passes to the left player, left player dribbles to middle and pass to the middle player. <p><u>Variations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish with scoring at the goalpost. Make sure that players have tried out all positions. Put a defensive player, passive or active, turning it into a 3v1. Increase the number of players within the crossover. <p>Focus: Players have to give clear explanations to each other on where the pass is to be received. Players also have to reflect on the right time to pass as well as analyse the timing of their runs.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What kind of run do you need to do to make sure that you are still looking at the ball? ➤ Do I run in front or behind my teammate? and Why? ➤ When running towards a goal, do you pass the ball at their feet or in front of the player? Why? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyes up when running Pass ball into feet. Pass using the inside. 		
Main IBL/CL activity 2: <i>Knockdown the ball</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create 3 average size boxes with makers which are spaced out evenly over the total area. Within the area place two cones anywhere in the area. Divide the group into 3 groups of 4 players each, with one player wearing a bib. The players have to pass to each other and have to knock down a cone. The player with a bib has to prevent them hitting the cone, and if in possession of the ball, they just stop the ball and the player who lost the ball becomes the new defender. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyes up when running Aim at target. Follow through with foot. 		

<p><u>Duration: 10 minutes</u></p>	<p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put balls into the area instead of cones for the target to be easier to hit. <p>Focus: Players have to actively listen to their teammates, especially teammates in possession of the ball, to assure that they are ready to receive or attack for the ball. Teammates also have to communicate clearly to discuss strategies and plan the best way to attack the cones.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do we open up when in possession of the ball? (to make it difficult for defenders) When your teammate is in possession of the ball and marked, what do you have to do? When defending, what is your best strategic move to get the ball? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass using the inside.
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 3: <u>Endzone play (3v3)</u></p> <p><u>Duration: 10 minutes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using half of the pitch, divide the area into two. In each area, there will be two teams of 3 players each, one team wearing bibs. The team in possession of the ball have to try to stop the ball on the opposing line. The team not in possession has to prevent the other team from stopping the ball on the line. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement several passes players have to do before going for an attack. Make the area wider to encourage supporting at an angle. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and critically analyse the situation to see when and how to pass the ball. Players have to actively listen to teammates as well as reflect on their position without the ball.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you are defending, what is the best way to defend your goal? (lead to press/cover) Why is it always important to be looking at the ball? How do we open up when in possession? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyes up when running Pass ball into feet. Pass using the inside.
<p>Concluding activity and Circle time:</p> <p><u>Duration: 20 minutes (15 minutes gameplay/5 minutes stretching)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players will play a 6-aside between them where important outcomes learned in the session must be implemented within the game. Here, 'FREEZE' moments can occur where the coach can pause the game, and question players about the current situation of play. Here, thinking and reasoning skills are tapped, where players have to reason their positioning, the way they are playing, and what they could have done better. After the game, players do the cool-down stretching by themselves while the coach asks questions about what impacted them through the session, and the players have to reflect, answer explain why. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and critically analyse the situation on what best to pass similar to the previous exercise while tackling the interpersonal skills within a real game scenario.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold the stretch for 20 seconds Straight legs Hold tight

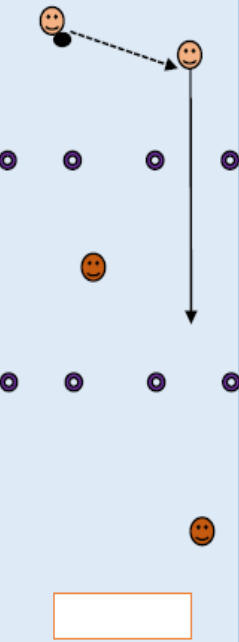
Appendix 14: Session Plan 4

Session no :	Age group:	Date:	Duration:	No. of players in the group:	Equipment needed:
4	U12's Female sector	08/12/2020	75 minutes	12	Footballs, Cones, Markers
Aims of the session: <i>Introducing and practising the attacking principles of football, which are penetration, depth, width, improvisation and mobility, with the use of critical thinking skills and collaboration when moving forward in attack.</i>					
Activities:	Description:	Diagram:	Coaching cues:		
<p>Warm up game: <i>Hitters and Dodgers</i> + Intro</p> <p><u>Duration: 15 minutes</u></p>	<p><i>(General specific warm-up and stretching done by players to promote empowerment)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a square grid with the markers depending on the number of players you have. • Each player must have a ball, however, only 3 players will start with the ball. The rest of the balls have to be out of the area. • The three players with the ball are called hitters, whereas the remaining players who start in the area scattered throughout the grid are the dodgers. • The hitters aim to try and hit as many dodgers as they can with the ball at their feet, while the dodgers try to avoid them. • Once a dodger is hit, they must get a ball from out of the area and become a hitter. • The last player standing wins. <p>Focus: Dodgers have to avoid being hit by being aware of their surroundings while the Hitters must communicate and work together to knock out as many dodgers as they can.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball close to feet. • Pass with the instep. • Look up when running. 		
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 1: <i>Knockdown the cone</i></p> <p><u>Duration: 10 minutes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create 3 average size boxes with markers which are spaced out evenly over the total area. • Within the area place two cones anywhere in the area. • Divide the group into 3 groups of 4 players each, with one player wearing a bib. • The players have to pass to each other and have to knock down a cone. • The player with a bib has to prevent them to hit the cone, and if in possession of the ball, they just stop the ball and the defender changes. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put balls into the area instead of cones for the target to be easier to hit. <p>Focus: Players have to actively listen to their teammates, especially teammates in possession of the ball, to assure that they are ready to receive or attack for the ball. Teammates also have to communicate clearly to discuss strategies and plan on the best way to attack the cones.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Why do we open up when possession of the ball? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What do we need to do to make it more difficult for the defenders? ➤ What do you have to do when your teammate is in possession of the ball and marked? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What do you need to do when your teammate has the ball and is finding it difficult to pass to an open player? ❖ What do you need to do to help your teammate? ❖ How do you help your teammate? ➤ When defending, what is your best strategic move when at a disadvantage? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What do you do when you lose the ball? (fall back, recollect) ❖ When is it the right time to attack the ball? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow through with foot. • Pass using the inside. 		

<p>Main IBL/CL activity 2: <u>Attacking gates</u></p> <p><u>Duration: 15 minutes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise. This area should be divided in half. Within each area, create 2 gates and place them in two corners of the area. Half of the group will be in one corner and the other half will be in another corner. Half of the group will have a ball each. On the coach's signal, players from both sides will come out, with the player having the ball being the attacker, and the other player is the defender (1v1). The goal of the attacker is to pass the ball through one of the gates whereas the goal of the defender is to stop the ball from being scored. <p><u>Progression:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress into 2 players coming out at once from one corner turning it into a 2v1 situation advantaging the attacking team. Eventually, this can be further progressed into a 2v2 situation. <p><u>Variations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coach chooses which gate they have to go to, and these can be changed throughout the duration of the activity. <p>Focus: Players have to think ahead of the choices to be made when in possession of the ball to critically analyse the situation and adapt on the go (quick thinking). Additionally, when implementing the progression, players have to communicate and be concise with each other on the best way to get to the gates efficiently.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When in possession of the ball, in a 1v1 situation, what are the skills that you can perform to outrun the opponent? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ When in a 1v1 situation, where should you be? (player between ball and opponent) ❖ What can you do to trick your opponent? (faking one side to other) ➤ When in a 2v1 situation, as a supportive teammate, what is the best position you can take up? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ball close to feet. Put your body between player and ball. Look up when running.
<p>Concluding activity and Circle time:</p> <p><u>Duration: 20 minutes (15 minutes gameplay/5 minutes stretching)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players will play a 6-aside between them where important outcomes learned in the session must be implemented within the game. Here, 'FREEZE' moments can occur where the coach can pause the game, and question players about the current situation of play. Here, thinking and reasoning skills are tapped, where players have to reason their positioning, the way they are playing, and what they could have done better. After the game, players do the cool-down stretching by themselves while the coach asks questions about what impacted them through the session, and the players have to reflect, answer explain why. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and critically analyse the situation on what best to pass similar to the previous exercise while tackling the interpersonal skills within a real game scenario.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold the stretch for 20 seconds Straight legs Hold tight

Appendix 15: Session Plan 5

Session no :	Age group:	Date:	Duration:	No. of players in the group:	Equipment needed:
5	U12's Female sector	11/12/2020	75 minutes	12	Markers, Football, Cones
Aims of the session: Practicing and implementing the attacking principles of football; depth/width, improvisation and mobility, with the use of critical thinking skills and collaboration when moving forward in attack.					
Activities:	Description:	Diagram:	Coaching cues:		
<p>Warm up game: <i>Extreme tag soccer + Intro</i></p> <p><u>Duration: 15 minutes</u></p>	<p>(General specific warm-up and stretching done by players to promote empowerment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a square grid with the markers, big enough for all the players to roam freely with an area. Players will have a ball each Players must dribble in the area with the ball and have to try and tag as many people as they can in 1 minute. Tagging a person equals 1 point, however, being tagged by a person is – 1 point, so children have to keep track of their scores. The player with the most points in that round wins. The tag has to be below the knees. <p>Focus: Players have to be aware of their surroundings to make sure that they are not bumping into other players. They are also to use critical and analysing thinking skills on the best way to travel through the area without being tagged (change of direction/speed, fakes etc.)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look up when running. Follow through with foot. Pass with the instep. 		
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 1: <i>Lions and Tigers</i></p> <p><u>Duration: 15 minutes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be using the perimeter of the half-pitch area. Divide the half-pitch area and create two rectangular grids with the markers. Put 6 players in each area (the area was divided into two, to promote physical time on task). In each area, divide the group in half (3 players each group) {creating a total of 4 groups in all}. Give number 1-3 to each player and put one group on one side of the area, and one group on the other side of the area. A ball is placed in the middle of the area. The Coach will call out a number and the players assigned that number must run to the ball in the middle and have a 1v1 game versus the other player. The player must run with the ball back to their side of the area for their team to gain a point. <p>Progression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start calling up two numbers, turning it into a 2v2. Finally, call up the numbers, finishing off with a 3v3 scenario. In both these situations, emphasise the importance of supporting at an angle and helping their teammates. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players start from various positions before their number is called such as sitting down, laying down etc (this will work on reaction time). Get a player to call the numbers of their teammates themselves. <p>Focus: Players have to think ahead of the choices to be made when in possession of the ball and to critically analyse the situation while adapting on the go (quick thinking). When playing in groups, players</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ball close to feet. Put your body between player and ball. Look up when running. 		

	<p>have to communicate with concise and clear explanations as well as discuss strategies beforehand.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In a 1v1 situation, how did you adapt and work with the space you had? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How do you improvise if the defender is at your back trying to take the ball? (skills!) ❖ Why is it important to change direction and speed of play in a 1 v1 situation? ➤ (For progression) How do you position yourself in the space provided in an equal 2v2/3v3 situation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Why should you go in space to get the ball from a teammate? ❖ Why is it important to open up when in possession of the ball? ❖ Where should you pass the ball? (dependent on a marked player or not) 		
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 2:</p> <p><u>2v2 beat the defender</u></p> <p><u>Duration: 15 minutes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area. Divide the area into 3 quarters horizontally. • The individual areas must again be divided into 3 sections vertically. • The players should be divided into 3 groups of 4 each. • Each area will have 4 players each, and 2 of these players will be attackers and 2 of them will be defenders. • In the first third of the area, there will be two attackers, in the second third of the area there will be one defender on one side, and in the last third of the area, there will be the other defender on the other side. • The objective is for the attackers to play together and pass through the first and second defender and finish on goal. • The objective of the defenders is to stop the attackers and prevent them from scoring. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase and decrease the size of the area provided. • Players have to do a select number of passes before attempting to skip the defenders and scoring. <p>Focus:</p> <p>Players have to be aware of where to move in steps when in a 2v1 scenario, where the focus is on how to run without a ball. This is to think without a ball, to critically examine the situation and move into the space appropriate for the pass. When playing in groups, players have to communicate with concise and clear explanations as well as discuss strategies beforehand.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In a 2v1 situation, why is important to constantly move into space? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How can you trick/make it difficult for the opponent in a 2v1 situation? ❖ Should a defender press every ball that passes between the opponent? ➤ Why is it important to strategise beforehand with your teammate during a play? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What do you discuss with your teammate before and during the activity? ❖ During the activity, were you prepared to overcome the defender? Why? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball close to feet. • Follow through with foot. • Pass with the instep. • Communicate with teammates

<p>Concluding activity and Circle time:</p> <p><u>Duration: 20 minutes (15 minutes gameplay/5 minutes stretching)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players will play a 6-aside between them where important outcomes learned in the session must be implemented within the game. • Here, 'FREEZE' moments can occur where the coach can pause the game, and question players about the current situation of play. Here, thinking and reasoning skills are tapped, where players have to reason their positioning, the way they are playing, and what they could have done better. • After the game, players do the cool-down stretching by themselves while the coach asks questions about what impacted them through the session, and the players have to reflect, answer explain why. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and critically analyse the situation on what best to pass similar to the previous exercise while tackling the interpersonal skills within a real game scenario.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the stretch for 20 seconds • Straight legs • Hold tight
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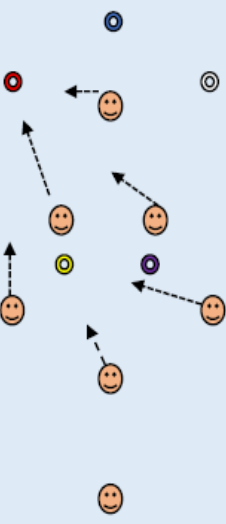
Appendix 16: Session Plan 6

Session no :	Age group:	Date:	Duration:	No. of players in the group:	Equipment needed:
6	U12's Female sector	12/12/2020	75 minutes	12	Markers, Football, Cones
Aims of the session: <i>Practicing and implementing the attacking principles of football, which are penetration, width and mobility (with the help of transitioning), and with the use of critical thinking skills and collaboration when moving forward in attack.</i>					
Activities:	Description:	Diagram:	Coaching cues:		
<p>Warm up game: <i>The Chase+ Intro</i></p> <p><u>Duration: 15 minutes</u></p>	<p><i>(General specific warm-up and stretching done by players to promote empowerment)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise. On one side of the perimeter put yellow markers, and on the other side put red markers. Divide the group in half, place them back to back to each other (about a meter between them). The coach will call out either red or yellow, and the group closest to the markers (on their side) will become the runner, whereas the other player will become the chaser. The chaser must tag the runner before they arrive at the marker. This exercise can also be done with the ball. <p>Focus: Runners have to react quickly to the stimulus provided by the Coach. Chasers have to also react quickly to the stimulus and be able to tag their teammate in time.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look up when running. Ears open. Run with arms swinging on the side. 		
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 1:</p> <p><u>Middle third transition</u></p> <p><u>Duration: 15 minutes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise. Divide this area into 3 sections with markers (lengthwise). The 3 sections are again divided through the middle. Players are divided into groups of 3 or in pairs. (3v1 or 2v1 across the area) Groups of players on the outer sections of the area will keep possession and pass the ball to one another whereas the group in the middle section are the defenders trying to take the ball. The groups on the outside have to pass to each other. Once a certain number of passes are completed, they have to pass through the channel without the middle defenders getting the ball. Once the middle group manages to take the ball, the group that lost the ball have to in their place within the middle. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the players on the outside holding possession or the defensive players defending. Two balls should be played at once, one on each side. <p>Focus: Players have to make use of the width for this activity to work. Players have to constantly communicate, whether it be with the small group or bigger group, to get the ball to get across from one side to another. Moreover, players have to think and find the right opportunity (critical thinking) of when to pass over without the defender deflecting the pass.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Why is it more practical to use width in this scenario? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Where do we open up in width when playing football? ❖ What do we do to support teammates when opening up? ❖ Why is having open space important when you are in possession of the ball? ➤ What should you do after passing the ball to your teammate? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Why should you be aware of what there is in your surroundings? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow through with foot. Pass with the instep. Communicate with teammates 		

	❖ Why is it important to move within the area without the ball?		
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 2:</p> <p><i>Finishing on goal</i></p> <p>Duration: 15 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise and use the small goals within this area. Divide this area in half, as two groups will be working at the same time. Divide the players into two groups (6 players each.) Players will take turns in participating both in the attacking and defensive teams in their areas. 3v2s will take place where the advantaged are attackers, the other players are defenders. The objective for the attackers is to push the ball forward and score. The objective for the defenders is to stop the ball from being scored. <p>Progression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the defenders manage to take the ball away from the opposition, there can be a transition of play where defenders have to get the ball to the centre line and back again to attack the goal. Here the groups switch. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease the distance between attacker and defender upon starting. Increase/decrease the space the attackers have to attack at goal. <p>Focus: Players have to think ahead when in possession of the ball to critically analyse the situation and adapt on the go (quick thinking). Players have to work, communicate and be concise with each other on the best way to attack and penetrate and scoring at goal (Attacking and scoring at goal).</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When is it the right time to push and attack? (penetrate) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ When attacking, should you play the ball where there are a lot of players? ❖ When attacking, why is a switch of play important? ➤ (For progression) What is it called when defenders become attackers when gaining possession of the ball? (change of transition, positive transition) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Why is it important that as soon as the defenders gain possession of the ball, they have to move out from the area as soon as possible? ❖ Once possession is lost, what do the attackers have to do? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ball close to feet. Put your body between player and ball. Look up when running.
<p>Concluding activity and Circle time:</p> <p>Duration: 20 minutes (15 minutes gameplay/5 minutes stretching)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players will play a 6-aside between them where important outcomes learned in the session must be implemented within the game. Here, 'FREEZE' moments can occur where the coach can pause the game, and question players about the current situation of play. Here, thinking and reasoning skills are tapped, where players have to reason their positioning, the way they are playing, and what they could have done better. After the game, players do the cool-down stretching by themselves while the coach asks questions about what impacted them through the session, and the players have to reflect, answer explain why. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and critically analyse the situation on what best to pass similar to the previous exercise while tackling the interpersonal skills within a real game scenario.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold the stretch for 20 seconds Straight legs Hold tight

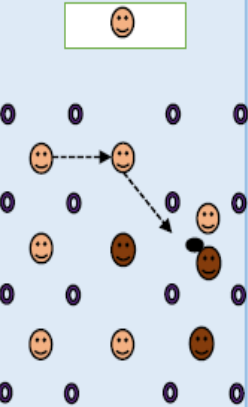
Appendix 17: Session Plan 7

Session no :	Age group:	Date:	Duration:	No. of players in group:	Equipment needed:
7	U12's Female sector	15/12/2020	75 minutes	12	Markers, Football, Cones
Aims of the session: <i>Implementing previous playing strategies learned to build up the ball from the back through possession and keeping the player's position of play through teamwork and communication.</i>					
Activities:	Description:	Diagram:	Coaching cues:		
<p>Warm up game: <i>Finders Keepers + Intro</i></p> <p>Duration: 15 minutes</p>	<p>(General specific warm-up and stretching done by players to promote empowerment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a rectangular area with markers that are slightly bigger than the penalty box. Get 12 balls however put only 11 on the outskirts of the area. The group of players have to run around in the area. Once the coach calls out for the players, they must run as fast as possible to the nearest ball and dribble back to the middle. Whoever is left without a ball, has to perform a small physical exercise such as 10 jumping lunges. <p>Focus: Runners have to react quickly to the stimulus provided by the Coach. Players also have to quickly change the speed and direction of the run to get to the ball as soon as possible.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look up when running. Ears open. Run with arms swinging on the side. 		
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 1: <i>Attacking build-up play</i></p> <p>Duration: 15 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create 4 triangles with the side of the triangles being about 10 steps long. The triangles will have 3 players each, where there are two passing players and one working player. The working players all need to have a ball, equalling to 8 balls being used for this exercise. The working player moves to receive a pass from one of the passing players, when the ball is received, the working player moves it to the other side of the cone and returns the pass. The working player then moves to receive the second pass on the opposite side of the cone. After the second pass, the working player passes to the second passing player. Make sure that all players take turns in being the 'working player'. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the distance for the pass shorter or longer. Change the angle at which the passes are being given. <p>Focus: Runners have to play the ball and then find the area that would allow them to receive the ball in open space. Players have to calculate and think when it is the right time to run into the free space depending on when and where the pass is to be given. Players also have to communicate and talk to one another to ensure that the ball arrives and is controlled at their feet.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Why is it important to communicate with your teammates on where you want the pass to be received? (to see that the ball is received in space) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Where should you suggest that your teammates give you the ball and why? ❖ Why does it make more sense to receive the ball in open space without the opponent marking you? ➤ When running without a ball, why is it important to always keep an eye on the ball? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Why should you be aware of what your teammate is doing when in possession of the ball? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at the player you are passing to. Look where you are passing. Move to receive the pass. 		

<p>Main IBL/CL activity 2: <i>Keeping shape with colours</i></p> <p><u>Duration: 15 minutes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise. • At the front of the area, place 3 different coloured markers (White, blue, red) at the right, middle or left side on the top of the area. • Additionally, place another 2 different coloured markers (yellow and orange) on the right and left side of the middle of the area. • Players are to be placed in their respective positions forming the 7-aside presented during a match. • As a unit, the players have to move and defend against the marker called by the coach. • Players have to stay in their position and move depending on where the marker being called is. <p>Progression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put a ball into the mix and allow players to pass the ball around and support the persons who have the ball, everyone else has to open up. • Put a defender into the mix and players have to defend that player wherever they go. <p>Focus: Players have to move and communicate as a unit in a compact shape without losing their positions when defending or attacking a ball. They have to make sure that all their teammates are in position, and if not have to help in correcting their position through positive and specific feedback. In this way, there is an emphasis on communication when it comes to giving feedback and taking on a leadership role with other players.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Why is it important for the team to keep position throughout the whole game? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Why is it important for you to keep your position throughout the whole game? ❖ When is there a situation in which you are allowed to change position? ➤ When pressing as a team, what shape should we take up? (diamond/triangles) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Should all of the team go press the same ball? ❖ What happens if all of the team goes to press the same ball? 	<p><u>If calling for a red marker</u></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look up when running. • Ears open. • (With progression) Ball close to feet • (With progression) Look at the player when passing the ball.
<p>Concluding activity and Circle time:</p> <p><u>Duration: 20 minutes (15 minutes gameplay/5 minutes stretching)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players will play a 6-aside between them where important outcomes learned in the session must be implemented within the game. • Here, 'FREEZE' moments can occur where the coach can pause the game, and question players about the current situation of play. Here, thinking and reasoning skills are tapped, where players have to reason their positioning, the way they are playing, and what they could have done better. • After the game, players do the cool-down stretching by themselves while the coach asks questions about what impacted them through the session, and the players have to reflect, answer explain why. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and critically analyse the situation on what best to pass similar to the previous exercise while tackling the interpersonal skills within a real game scenario.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the stretch for 20 seconds • Straight legs • Hold tight

Appendix 18: Session Plan 8

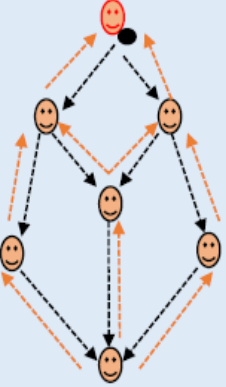
<u>Session no :</u>	<u>Age group:</u>	<u>Date:</u>	<u>Duration:</u>	<u>No. of players in the group:</u>	<u>Equipment needed:</u>
8	U12's Female sector	18/12/2020	75 minutes	12	Markers, Football, Cones
Aims of the session:: <i>Implementing previous playing strategies learned to build up the ball from the back through possession and positive transition while keeping the player's position of play.</i>					
<u>Activities:</u>	<u>Description:</u>	<u>Diagram:</u>	<u>Coaching cues:</u>		
<p>Warm up game: <i>Stealing from the bank + Intro</i></p> <p><u>Duration: 15 minutes</u></p>	<p><i>(General specific warm-up and stretching done by players to promote empowerment)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a rectangular area with markers that are slightly bigger than the penalty box. • In the area, create separate lines at the end of the area which will mark the zones for the players. • Balls will be placed in one of the zones, which is the 'bank' where the 'police' will be. • The group of players will be divided into two groups where one group will contain 8 players and the other will contain 4 players. The group containing 4 players will be the police and the other group with 8 players will be the thieves. • The thieves aim to try and enter the 'bank' area to steal the balls from the zone and bring them back to the area, the police have to try and stop the thieves from taking the ball by tagging them. • If the thief is tagged they must run back to their zone and go back to the 'bank' zone to try and steal again. <p>Focus: Players have to discuss the best strategies to implement when defending the balls or when taking the balls away from the area. The strategy must be utilised by all of the players part of the team for it to be successful.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look up when running. • Ball close to feet • Quick and small touches with the ball. 		
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 1: <i>7-aside build-up play</i></p> <p><u>Duration: 15 minutes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise. • For the first part of the exercise, divide the half-pitch area into thirds. • Divide the group of players into groups of 3 with 4 players each. • Each group will have a ball and an area to work in. • As a team of 4, the group has to practice passing the ball from the back to the front, while moving forward and backwards as a unit without losing their current positions. <p>Progression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once players look comfortable and get the concept of building up the ball and moving around as a unit, they will then try this with 7 players. • The formation will be 2-3-1 and players have to move as a unit while building the ball from the back (From keeper) <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should also experiment with movements sideways or randomly around the area they are designated in. <p>Focus: Players have to move and communicate as a unit without losing their positions when defending or attacking a ball. They have to make sure that all their teammates are in position, and if not have to help in correcting their position through positive and specific feedback. In this way, there is an emphasis on communication when it comes to giving feedback and taking on a leadership role with other players.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the player you are passing to. • Look where you are passing. • Move to receive the pass. 		

	<p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Why should you be aware of the space that you are in with and without the ball? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Why is it important to look at the player before passing? ❖ Why should you always look at your teammates regardless if they are with or without the ball? ➤ Why is it important to move together as a team when in possession of the ball? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What would happen if one player decides to stay behind and not move with the team? ❖ How does the shape help support your teammate? 		
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 2: <i>Keeping team shape with grids.</i></p> <p><u>Duration: 15 minutes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise. • Set up the area with 9 grids in all using markers. Each grid should roughly be 15 steps wide and in length. • 6 players are placed in each separate grid which would reflect their positioning during a 7-aside game. The rest of the player's available fill in the other grids. • The objective for the players in minority is to pass the ball around from one grid to the next and try to score in goal. • The objective for the 6 players in defence is to prevent the other players from scoring a goal by allowing only two players maximum from their team to enter the grid that the opponent and ball is in. This is to promote keeping shape. <p><u>Variations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase and decrease the number of offensive and defensive players. • Restrict that only one player can enter the grid as opposed to two. <p>Focus: The larger group of players have to work together efficiently to cover the ball against an opponent (by efficient meaning that not all players go on the same ball). The smaller group have to play the ball and then find the area (space) that would allow them to receive the ball in an open space. Players have to calculate and think when it is the right time to run into the free space depending on when and where the pass is to be given. Players also have to communicate and talk to one another to ensure that the ball arrives and is controlled at their feet.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Why do you think I emphasised that only 2 players of the same team can be within the same grid? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What happens if a lot of players go for the same ball? ❖ Do you think that the grids present your position well? (grid keeps them in the same area, if the ball is in their favour, the grid or bubble has to move) ➤ What does an empty grid represent/compare to what happens in a real game? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ When your teammate comes out of her area/grid to defend the ball, as the player next to her, what are you supposed to do? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open up in possession. • Look at the player you are passing to. • Look where you are passing. • Move to receive the pass.

	❖ As a team, how should you move when one player goes out to defend the ball/slightly alters shape?		
<p>Concluding activity and Circle time:</p> <p><u>Duration: 20 minutes (15 minutes gameplay/5 minutes stretching)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players will play a 6-aside between them where important outcomes learned in the session must be implemented within the game. • Here, 'FREEZE' moments can occur where the coach can pause the game, and question players about the current situation of play. Here, thinking and reasoning skills are tapped, where players have to reason their positioning, the way they are playing, and what they could have done better. • After the game, players do the cool-down stretching by themselves while the coach asks questions about what impacted them through the session, and the players have to reflect, answer explain why. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and critically analyse the situation on what best to pass similar to the previous exercise while tackling the interpersonal skills within a real game scenario.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the stretch for 20 seconds • Straight legs • Hold tight

Appendix 19: Session Plan 9

Session no :	Age group:	Date:	Duration:	No. of players in the group:	Equipment needed:
9	U12's Female sector	22/12/2020	75 minutes	12	Markers, Football, Cones
Aims of the session:: <i>Implementing previous playing strategies learned to build up the ball from the back through possession and positive/negative transition while keeping the player's position of play.</i>					
Activities:	Description:	Diagram:	Coaching cues:		
<p>Warm up game: + Intro Alligators and Hunters Duration: 15 minutes</p>	<p><i>(General specific warm-up and stretching done by players to promote empowerment)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divide the half-pitch area in half, and place 2 markers close but opposite each other to create a halfway line. Players are to pair up and wait at the designated markers opposite one another with their backs to each other. The players are divided into two teams (the players that standing opposite one another). One team are the alligators and the other team is the hunters. Each player will have a ball at their feet which they will eventually use during the dribble run. The coach will call out either 'Alligators' or 'Hunters'. If for example, Alligator, the group Alligators must run with the ball to the other side of the area as fast as they can while the Hunters have to try and take the ball or tag the opposing player. <p>Focus: Players have to acoustically focus on the sound stimuli given by the coach while at the same time having a quick enough reaction to dribble away from their opponent. This simulates a 1v1 situation towards a goal.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ears open! Look up when running. Swing arms at side 		
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 1: Keeping team shape with grids. Duration: 15 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise. Set up the area with 9 grids in all using markers. Each grid should roughly be 15 steps wide and in length. 6 players are placed in each separate grid which would reflect their positioning during a 7-aside game. The rest of the players' available fill in the other grids. The objective for the players in minority is to pass the ball around from one grid to the next and try to score in goal. The objective for the 6 players in defence is to prevent the other players from scoring a goal by allowing only two players maximum from their team to enter the grid that the opponent and ball is in. This is to ensure and promote keeping shape. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase and decrease the number of offensive and defensive players. Restrict that only one player can enter the grid as opposed to two. <p>Focus: The larger group of players have to work together efficiently to cover the ball against an opponent (by efficient meaning that not all players go on the same ball). The smaller group have to play the ball and then find the area that would allow them to receive the ball in an open space. Players have to calculate and think when it is the right time to run into the free space depending on when and where the pass is to be given. Players also have to communicate and talk to one another to ensure that the ball arrives and is controlled at their feet.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open up in possession. Look at the player you are passing to. Look where you are passing. Move to receive the pass. 		

	<p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Why is it important that teammates communicate with one another on who's going for the ball? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What should teammates discuss together when defending the ball? ❖ Why should you avoid all players going towards the same area? ➤ When in possession of the ball what should you do in the attack? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What should you do if there is an empty grid/open space in front of you when in possession of the ball? ❖ What does an open space mean for the defending players? 		
<p>Main IBL/CL activity 2: <i>Positive to negative transition</i></p> <p><u>Duration: 15 minutes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the perimeter of the half-pitch area for this exercise. • Place the players in the positions (To help the players, you can place markers in the vicinity of where they should place themselves on the pitch). • The players left from the 7 playing are to shadow other players by following their movements. • The shadowing players should be changed with every transition completed. • The ball will start from the keeper and will progress upwards however the players deem it best. • The coach, at random moments, shall call for a positive or negative transition. • Here players have to see the best way to get the ball moving to portray the transition that the coach has called for (Example: Ball is at midfield if the coach calls negative transition, the midfielder has to send the ball through defender and then to keeper). <p><u>Progression:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shadowing players now have to act as defenders. First, they shall begin with passive pressing on the ball. After a few minutes and the rest of the group getting used to this dynamic, active pressing is implemented. • Once active pressing is implemented, Attacking players have to avoid that they lose the ball to the defensive team. <p>Focus: Players have to move and communicate as a unit in a compact shape without losing their positions when defending or attacking a ball. They should communicate and call for one another to receive a pass. Players also have to anticipate and think about the best option to get the ball to its target as soon as possible, which means thinking of a passing combination that will help the transition go smoothly.</p> <p>Questioning section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is the difference between positive and negative transitioning? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What is it called when the ball is being passed from the keeper to a midfielder? ❖ What is it called when the ball is being passed from the striker to a defender? ➤ Why is it important to always be prepared for a pass regardless of where you are or your position? (Being a defender but the ball is in positive transition example) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Is there only one kind of transition constantly happening during the game? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open up in possession. • Look at the player you are passing to. • Look where you are passing. • Move to receive the pass.

	❖ Why should you be attentive whenever there is a switch of play whether horizontal or vertical?		
<p>Concluding activity and Circle time:</p> <p><u>Duration: 20 minutes (15 minutes gameplay/5 minutes stretching)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players will play a 6-aside between them where important outcomes learned in the session must be implemented within the game. • Here, 'FREEZE' moments can occur where the coach can pause the game, and question players about the current situation of play. Here, thinking and reasoning skills are tapped, where players have to reason their positioning, the way they are playing, and what they could have done better. • After the game, players do the cool-down stretching by themselves while the coach asks questions about what impacted them through the session, and the players have to reflect, answer explain why. <p>Focus: Players have to communicate and critically analyse the situation on what best to pass similar to the previous exercise while tackling the interpersonal skills within a real game scenario.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the stretch for 20 seconds • Straight legs • Hold tight