YOU CAN'T STOP THE WAVES.....
BUT YOU CAN LEARN HOW TO SURF:
A Proposal to Study Youth Surf Programs and Their Impact on At-Risk Youth

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6.9.2010
Research Proposal
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INTRODUCTION

An attempt to frame my research question nicely and neatly within the confines of traditional social research has proved challenging. I am interested in the dynamics of the ocean and how humans, specifically children, can be changed by interacting with the sea. Just as the ocean shifts its borders with the changing of the tides, the questions spilling forth from my brain out on to paper have frothy edges--they are not as simple as, "Does surfing have an impact on the social development of 'at-risk' youth?" because the ocean does not put labels on groups of people the way we have done. I ask myself, "How can I quantify and simplify the way spending time in the ocean changes a person?" when I am still learning the answer for myself and I have been playing in the ocean for almost 30 years? I find it incredibly unsatisfying to take a snap shot of the ocean and then try to tell a story about it. To explore the essence of what the sea has to offer children, a more fluid approach is necessary--both in direct contact with the ocean AND in the way social research is done.

I have discovered that all the reading, question rewording and survey rewriting, pre-testing, lecturing, and peer-reviewing has shown me, again, a fundamental truth about life, "you can't stop the waves, but you can learn how to surf." Life is full of swells of energy. Some swells translate into the gently rolling waves of everyday tasks with a rogue wave hitting a person's life every now and again. There are some swells that are always gnarly, and it is easy to describe the life of 'at-risk' youth in this way--these children are exposed to a range of intense "waves" of violence in their homes and communities, poverty, delinquency, poor education options, poor nutrition, and an overall lack of resources and options for the future. These issues may or may not mean these children are being parented well. The socioeconomic status they were born into has much to do with the quality of the institutions available to them. If the

"everyday waves" of these children's lives are mostly of the gnarly variety, they must learn how to surf these waves to survive. I am interested in learning if surfing a physical wave in the ocean, where the stakes are considerably lower in comparison to the intense waves of their everyday lives, can somehow translate to learning how to ride the waves of their lives with a little more savvy. For the sake of this research project, I have narrowed my question: **Does one visit to the beach for a surf lesson provide the impetus for a shift in the self-perception of 'at-risk' youth, or are multiple visits necessary to see a shift in a child's personal and world view?**

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the research suggests the above question has yet to be considered. The current research focused on sports participation among youth and adolescents is concerned primarily with subjective psychological and social development (Ogilvie, 1979; Williams, 1951; Hattie, Marsh, Neill, and Richards, 1997), achievement in school (Hanson and Kraus, 1998; McNeal, 1995; Broh, 2002; Murtaugh, 1988), deviant behavior among adolescent athletes (Kreager, 2007; Sandford, Armour, and Warmington, 2006; Dawkins, Williams, and Guilbault, 2006), and physical health (Whitt-Glover, Taylor, Floyd, Yore, Yancey, and Matthews, 2009; Flores, 1995).

There is much to be read about the impact of sports on the life of a child, from how being picked last for a team can damage a child so deeply that the wound shows up in their adult life (Ogilvie, 1979), to how participation in contact sports can translate into violence off the field (Kreager, 2007). Research shows that kids who are not savvy academically will look to extracurricular activities as a way to achieve some semblance of success (Murtaugh, 1988), but that the type of extracurriculars they choose may improve their academic prowess (Broh, 2002). There is research that acknowledges the social value of adolescents and champions youth

development programs geared specifically to help a child flourish in this mostly awkward stage of life (Sanford, Armour, and Warmington, 2006). After an exhaustive search, I came up short of finding research done on the affects surfing has on youth development. There was nothing out there that chose to describe a sport that is known for being on the "fringes," for being considered extreme and "counter" culture. I found one study about immersion in an extreme natural setting (Hattie, Marsh, Neill, and Richards, 1997). Hattie's hypothesis that of "out-of-class experiences make a lasting difference," comes close to embodying the impact surfing can have on the body, mind, and soul.

Participation in Sports and its Effects on Psycho-Social Development

It has been found that kids thrive when they have structured tasks to fulfill and a systematic way of going about their work (Ogilvie 1979; Broh 2002). It has also been found that kids are more likely to drop out of school if they do not feel a connection with the material they are studying (Murtaugh 1988). What's more, they do not blame the poorly designed system for their lack of thriving, they blame themselves (Broh 2002). The same is true for youth that participate in sports and find themselves developing at a physically slower rate than their would-be competitors (Ogilivie 1979). Ogilvie found that youth are likely to be pushed out of a sport they love because their rate of physical growth does not match up with a coach's expectations(1979).

The research suggests that involvement in nonacademic activities can be a useful starting point for understanding the lives of adolescents (Murtaugh 1988). These activities are often of more importance to young people than their school work and often have a greater affect their immediate lives. Rather than regard these activities as mere distractions from school work, greater attempts should be made to recognize and encourage the positive aspects of students' outside interests. (Murtaugh 1988). However, measurable shifts in what is considered positive

growth by researchers cannot be found when children organize themselves in neighborhood

games (Ogilvie 1979) or intramural sports (Broh 2002). Youth must participate in well organized

sports that meet consistently; and there must be an emphasis on some kind of competition to

teach a child how to gain control over their world (Ogilvie 1979; Kreager 2007; Murtaugh 1988).

Whether it is competition with themselves, or competition with others does not matter--they both

offer the child a sense of control.

The research on the psycho-social affects of sports on children seems to share the

findings that, "freedom of expression, joy, and emotional release are combined with important

social rewards to produce a positive effect" (Ogilvie 1979:49) and to help children integrate

values deemed important by society. To Ogilvie, "success is nothing more than the positive

utilization of failure," (1979:57) and that feeling of success is easily achievable in a sports

setting, with fairly low stakes.

Participation in Sports and Academic Achievement

Social theory divides youth up into categories of Leading-Crowd, Social Capital Model, and

Developmental Model (Broh 2002). There are studies that show after-school programs are great,

but only if attendance remains constant and the administrators of the activities stay engaged

(Sanford, Armour, and Warmington 2006). Social ties may act as conduits for human capital,

educational resources, and/or transmission of information that directly benefit students'

achievement (Broh 2002). Murtaugh found,

> For many students who are far from the top of their class, outside activities appear to
> offer an alternative path to achievement and self-esteem. Activities can provide students
> with a sense of accomplishment and involvement, an opportunity to, in effect, create their
> own curriculum, ask their own questions, pursue their own path to achievement.
> Nonetheless, the present findings do not suggest that alienation in school leads to greater
> involvement in activities. Further, those students who pursued their activities through

school programs appeared more systematic in their training and more realistic in their expectations than those working less formally. (1988:394)

In his study of 60 high school aged youth at a high school in Los Angeles, Murtaugh spent much time interviewing and getting to know his subjects (for example, he analyzed their doodles in the margins of their notebooks and cared to ask the who, what, where, when and why of their chosen doodling practices). The abundance of face time and attention to details allowed for honest and open communication between Murtaugh and the students.

This connection between youth and adults is pivotal for a child's social development. It fosters what Broh termed "extrafamilial networks," that are an, "important source of social capital," and that, "the formation and intensification of social ties through sports activities create social capital outside the family," (2002:72). The social capital she speaks of is characterized by sports participation, specifically.

Youth sports are viewed as (1) increasing adolescents' bonds to schools, conventional peers, and conventional adults; (2) socializing adolescents into the basic values of American life, such as competition, fair play, self-restraint, and achievement; and (3) helping students develop social and physical competence, leading to increased self-esteem, social capital, and upward mobility. (Kreager 2007:705-706)

Sports are believed to teach youth how to have a strong work ethic, respect for authority, endurance, and to value achievement (Broh 2002). The research says that to increase social capital, adolescents must create extrafamilial networks. These can be characterized as ties to role models (i.e. coaches, mentors, teachers) with whom the child has a bond. These ties that exist outside the family give the child the feeling of strength and independence, two markers of positive youth development.

Several studies, (of both the primary and secondary analysis variety) discovered something that surprised the researchers: Youth that were not considered talented academically

and so chose instead to focus on their extracurricular activities (organized sports), actually improved their academic performances (Broh 2002). The type of sports did not matter (Except for cheerleading--those who participate in cheerleading show no academic improvements. Cheerleading was mentioned in several of the studies as NOT being considered a sport.), and a gender-specific study that found girls who participated in organized athletics showed an increased interest and prowess in science (Hanson and Kraus 1998).

Sports Participation and Deviant Behavior

The literature states that participation in athletics has both an upside and a downside: That while students who participate in extracurriculars are more likely to increase their social capital and improve their leading-crowd status (i.e. popularity) (Broh 2002), there is a dark side to this popularity--for those in power (i.e. those students who participate in the most popular sports: football, baseball, and basketball) are primarily boys and the higher their status, the more deviant behavior they can get away with. There is a positive correlation between male violence and participation in football and wrestling. There is no correlation between violence and those sports that do not promote physical contact with other players (such as tennis) (Kreager 2007). Kreager also found that,

> Sports that emphasize respect for others, self-control, patience, and humility can serve to reduce the violence of aggressive male adolescents. Programs developed according to these ideals may not necessarily win as many matches as those built on aggression and competitiveness, but their attractiveness lies in positively affecting the lives of problematic youth while fostering an environment of inclusiveness and respect. (2007:721)

Kreager highlights martial arts as an excellent example of a sport that utilizes the values he believes will help guide youth into becoming productive adults. After reading his descriptions, I believe surfing is another sport that could fit the bill. However, Kreager is also skeptical of the

infrastructure that supports the deviant behavior encouraged by participation in highly aggressive sports(2007:721). He says to change the cycle of violence among youth, there must be a de-emphasis on the "winning is everything" mentality that is fostered by coaches and players to make their communities proud (Kreager 2007). This sentiment is echoed by Ogilvie, who laments that many youth are "punished out" of their sport by coaches who refused to accept the reality of their mental and physical readiness(1979:57). The stress of failure translates into a child leaving a sport, or engaging in deviant behavior (Ogilivie 1979; Kreager 2007).

The findings of the research suggest that alternative sports deserve to be looked at: sports that discourage violence, sexism and racism. Martial Arts is mentioned, and surfing is another such sport. It is done in a medium (the ocean) that can be both calm or aggressive depending on the weather, and it can be approached calmly or aggressively, depending on the preferred athletic style and mood of the surfer. In my own experience, spending all day every day the beach for a lengthy period of time (lengthy: one week) is like finding ones own personal groundswell from which to draw inner strength in times of trial. The ocean seems to have this way of knocking the fight out of a person, which may serve to challenge some of the current social theories on youth athletics and deviant behavior.

Sports Participation and its Health Implications

Health is defined in the research in both mental and physical terms. For Ogilvie, health is measured by a child's level of joy and serenity obtained by participation in organized sports (1979). He speaks of youth being given the freedom of expression and control over their experience that allows for a "peak experience," (1979:58) such as a runner's high (an endorphin rush). If most illness and poor health have their roots in stress, then it is the responsibility of

ruling adults and the very design of the athletic program or after-school program to encourage the "self-actualizing" process for youth (Ogilivie 1979:58).

For Flores, physical health is measured by participation in athletic activities beyond physical education classes and organized school sports (1995). She studied the effects of a Dancing for Health program on a group of middle schoolers of Latino and African-American descent and the results included increased cardiovascular health and an increase in over all positive attitude. The children were engaging in an activity that was both artistic, social and individual. It was also considered an activity that the children would not otherwise participate in unless organized by an interested party. Because of the unique nature of Flores' work, the children were "turned on" by how these out-of-the-ordinary moments (dance classes) fit into their every day lives. The children did not consider the dancing extra "exercise" because it was fun (1995:190). Her ultimate goal was not only to measure their increased levels of cardiovascular health and decreased chances for diabetes and obesity, but at fitting "activity" into their lifestyles.

Flores' "exercise disguised as fun" approach to improved health practices for children could be further explored in a surf program. Most often, people do not consider their energetic expenditure because they are concerned about catching a wave--like playing tag with a body of water. More than catching a wave, the participants are thoroughly engaged with their activity: they are PRESENT for the task at hand, with little room for concern about anything other than the next wave about to crash.

METHODS

The methods used to study children regarding sports participation and academic achievement are both qualitative and quantitative. In depth personal interviews and surveys are the most popular forms of direct analysis, and quantitative analysis of national survey data is the predominant method of secondary analysis. There is no simple way to get 'at-risk' youth to the beach for a surf unless they are organized by a park and recreation department, youth group, or after-school program that has a link of some kind with a surf school (that is, some organization with the equipment necessary for a massive surf lesson). If money is no object, my research methodology would include a comparative study that evaluates three such non-profit organizations whose mission is to bring 'at-risk' or 'underrepresented' youth to the beach to learn to surf.

The largest and oldest of these three groups is **The Surf Bus Foundation** out of Los Angeles. It was begun in 2003 and modeled after its parent supporter, Surf Academy, a large surf school with locations in Huntington Beach, Manhattan Beach/El Segundo, and Santa Monica. The Surf Bus Foundation brings three bus loads of children, aged six years old to twenty years old, from over 100 park and recreation departments in Los Angeles and surrounding Los Angeles County to each of its three beach locations five days a week (that is, nine buses a day, five days a week) over a 10-week period in the summer months. Because of sheer volume, not all the children who come to the beach surf at once. There is a rotation of beach games, yoga, boogie boarding, and surfing one-on-one with a Surf Academy trained instructor.

The Wahine Project is a new nonprofit born in Monterey, CA this winter of 2010. Unlike The Surf Bus Foundation, The Wahine Project is focused on girls only from the ages of 10-17 years old. Its primary feeder is the Boys and Girls Club of Monterey and more recently,

Oasis Charter School in Salinas. Currently, The Wahine Project uses volunteer surf instructors to help design its time line of events for each planned surf day, which are on either Saturdays or Sundays. The girls must find their own transportation to the beach.

Streetwaves is a nonprofit anchored in South Beach, Florida. It was begun in August 2008 after the founder lost his younger brother to gang violence. The students of his program fit the description of the young man who shot his brother. He is in contact with various youth centers, juvenile detention centers, and local word of mouth. He teaches around 10 students at a time every Saturday and Sunday for 16-week blocks. Streetwaves also incorporates swimming lessons into its curriculum, utilizing local pools to help acclimate the targeted at-risk teenagers to prolonged immersion in water in a controlled way, before immersing the in the unbridled energy of the open ocean.

My ideal method is to model The Surf Bus Foundation, The Wahine Project, and Streetwaves after Surf Academy's weeklong curriculum (Appendix I). In an effort to increase my sample size and to measure the effects of surfing on youth across coastlines, I want to use the populations that each of these nonprofits reach in my research. This is not an evaluation of The Surf Bus Foundation, Streetwaves, and The Wahine Project, but rather, an opportunity to use the children these programs are in relationship with to test my research question. In order to obtain accurate results, I want each program to adopt the same protocol and design.

I want to observe the same group of children on the beach from 9am until 2:30pm, Monday through Friday for one week in early July, and then for another week of all day surf camp in late August. The children would be separated by gender, with the girls wearing different colored rashguards than the boys. The girls will be taught by female instructors and the boys will be taught by male instructors. The ratio of teachers to students is 1:5. Each day of camp is

informed by different tenets of The Surfer's Code (Appendix II) with lectures and games designed to embody The Code, both literally and symbolically. The participating children would be given a survey at the beginning of their first week of surfing and at the end of their second week of surfing, at least one month later. Some children would be chosen for follow-up personal interviews once the school year started. The surfing portions of the day would be videotaped for the purposes of content analysis.

A second group of children will follow The Surf Bus' traditional format, which is the same group of kids coming to the beach on the same day of the week for 10 weeks over the course of the summer. This group will not be split according to gender. They will be on a rotational time line that includes yoga, beach games, water games, boogie boarding, and one-on-one surfing instruction for 20 minutes at a time. The ratio of teachers to students is 1:10, with the counselors from the particular park and recreation department in attendance filling in the other half of the ratio (dropping the ratio down to 1:5). The children would be given a survey at the onset of their first day on the beach, and then again at their last day. Some children would be chosen for a follow-up in person interview several months into the school year. Each visit to the beach would be video taped for content analysis. The researchers are looking for signs of comfortability and distress in relationship to the activities being performed or the medium (the ocean) within which, they are being acted out.

Distress and comfortability are measured by the youths' willingness to participate in games that have them interacting with the ocean at various depth levels (knee deep, thigh deep, waist deep, chest deep, submerged). The researchers are looking to see how enthusiastic or cautious the youth are when presented with activities, both on land and in the ocean, both with and without surf boards, that test their motivation, self-esteem, endurance, and trust. These are

the same categories that are represented in the survey questions. A sampling of games, ranging from low stakes to higher stakes according to the day of the week, are listed in Appendix IV of this proposal.

Follow-up interviews are an integral part of this research design, especially in regard to creating year-round after school programs. The projected number of participating youth in each research model are around 50-60 heads. If money was no object, I would train each of the surf instructors that worked with the kids on the beach to also do the follow up interviews. We would stay in contact with every child. To obtain an accurate picture of the effects of surfing on at-risk youth, I think interviewing one-third of each group (20 kids from the week-long group, and 20 kids from the once-a-week group), chosen at random, is a sufficient number of interviews to answer my research question.

The difference we are trying to measure is immersion in surf culture (every day waves) versus one-day extravaganzas (rogue waves). Is the way we are introducing them to the beach being reflected in the way they internalize the experience? That is to say, if they come to the beach every day and it is a routine, will the lessons learned stay with them and be used on a daily basis? If the children are invited to the beach one time, and the trip is as common as, say, a trip to Disneyland, will the experience they have be treated in a similar way? As not truly applicable to their everyday lives, because it is such an "out of the ordinary" experience?

There are weaknesses in this design, some of which are within the control of the researcher and some are not. First, even though The Surf Bus Foundation will supply the bus to pick up the children from their respective parks, not all the same children are always in attendance. Some of this is due to an erratic home life or other social factors that are outside of our control. In an attempt to create and maintain some semblance of social organization, these

children do not always have practice with this kind of organization and consistency. Because it is foreign to them in their own lives, they do not know how remain consistent (or that they are allowed to show they LIKE the consistency, because it is different behavior than what the authoritative adults in their lives display). A second weakness I see pertains to the divisions in teaching method for the one-day visitors and the weeklong visitors. Girls and boys tend to approach activities differently, and while those differences are acknowledged in the weeklong test groups, they are not in the one-day groups. This means some kids may not feel they can express themselves fully because stronger personalities or potential behavioral issues are dominating the scene. A third weakness is in the amount of surfing time allotted for each group. In the one-day group, the kids are rotated into the line up to be taught one-on-one, but in the weeklong group, the kids are all given surf boards and the instructors will work with them privately, but all the kids are in the ocean learning how to work around each other and handle their boards at once. The one-day group has a more protected, albeit shorter, experience.

A challenge in limiting for weaknesses in the one-day a week design have to do with time constraints, permit policy rules, and Los Angeles traffic. We are only allowed to have so many children on the beach at one time because of lifeguard coverage. Even with unlimited research money to pay for the kids' transportation to the beach, we are physically limited by morning Los Angeles traffic and by Los Angeles County lifeguard policies and permit restrictions. Surf Academy runs its programs in the same general beach area as The Surf Bus Foundation, and safety in the water is a key issue. With California State budget cuts, there are less lifeguards on duty, which has limited the numbers of students we are allowed to have in our programs on the beach at one time. For the one-day-a-week research project, there will be a for-profit surf camp happening with 60 kids. To control the crowds with safety in mind, we must stagger the start

time of The Surf Bus with Surf Academy. The Surf Bus starts later and ends earlier to keep time spent in city traffic to a minimum.

A strength of the research model is the amount of time given to the children to explore the surfing experience. Both groups of children are coming for a total of ten days. Both groups of children get the benefit of learning about the ocean in a safe environment and exposure to adults who LOVE the ocean and the art of surfing. The children's participation in surfing can serve to increase their cultural and social capital.

To be thorough, a mixed methods approach is the best way to answer my research question. Surveys, interviews, content analysis, and participant observation are the methods to be used in this comparative study of youth participation in a weeklong beach experience and a one-day beach experience. I want to get an idea of the participants 'starting point' before they get out on the beach. The surveys serve to measure their self-perceived prowess in the classroom and out on the sports field. I want to allow the surfing experience to sink in for the participants, so in-depth interviews are a good way to gauge how well the experience has permeated the children's everyday lives. To capitalize on the already established rapport between the children and their surf instructors, the surf teachers will be trained to conduct the interviews. Videotaping of the surf experience is also a valuable observation tool. I want to use it to explain any potential misrepresentation of information collected by the surveys. I may tabulate the scores of the surveys and find that children do trust adults or that they report they have a high level of endurance in athletic practices, but the video shows something different.

PRETEST FINDINGS

For the purposes of the pretest, I am donating my time and Surf Academy's equipment to serve the girls of The Wahine Project. Instead of working with the girls for a full week, I will be working with them over two weekends, spaced three weeks apart because of the Memorial Day weekend vacation. The girls will fill out a survey when they arrive at the beach before each surf lesson they take. Ideally, the same girls will be in participation for the second lesson as the first, but there may be more participants than the initial pretest day OR the same amount of girls, but different ones.

The first day of research was conducted on Sunday, May 16 at Del Monte Beach in Monterey. There were twelve girls confirmed for the free surf day, six from The Boys and Girls Club of Monterey and six from Oasis Charter School, but only eight girls showed up. All the girls who confirmed through Oasis were present. All the girls' parents signed the consent forms to participate in the survey, interviews, and videotaping. The girls were all between the ages of twelve and fourteen years old. The population of children observed for the pretest is like the corner of a snap shot of the population The Surf Bus serves. There are Latina girls between the ages of twelve and fourteen that will be in participation with The Surf Bus Foundation research project, as well as almost every other race and ethnicity present in Los Angeles. The girls on Sunday also represented various other 'at-risk' labels--one girl was adopted and subject to physical abuse by her biological father and another girl had multiple sclerosis. These "hidden" risks are understood to be present in our Surf Bus population, and we know this because of information we have been given by the park and recreation department leaders. Our teacher to student ratio for the pretest was 1:2, but for the larger research problem, the ratio will be 1:5.

The first round of surveys proved to need clarifications and revisions. The girls that showed up before our 10 a.m. start time filled out the surveys in their entirety, and if they had any questions, they asked each other for clarity. There were two girls that were late, and their surveys were not filled out properly. The two girls missed entire pages of the four-page survey, which leads me to believe they were moving too quickly to notice that the survey questions were printed on the front-back. The two girls that were late did not know each other from school, so they did not ask one another for help if they did not understand the questions or needed feedback from their peers about their behavior on a day-to-day basis. One of the two girls was answering the questions according to what her mother was telling her to write. I did inform the mother that this was a personal survey and the girls were to give their own perspectives, not those of adults.

I video taped as much of the session (the introductory name game, the yoga stretches, and the land surf lesson) as possible before the camera malfunctioned and we had to stop filming. The videographer was instructed to train the camera on the girls' faces and bodies. Unfortunately, the quality of the video taken was not sufficient to submit for this project as content analysis. The video was not shot in a way that made it viable to analyze the girls' body language. For this purpose, I decided to omit the use of video going forward for the second pretest.

The survey was not labeled with headings, but the questions were ordered to measure the girls' self perceptions regarding motivation, self-esteem, endurance, and trust. Each section had six questions with two parts: a set of questions regarding their perceptions about sports and questions about their academic abilities. To differentiate between sections, I color coded the scored information and created a range of scores based on how many questions from the section they answered. Scoring is inclusive of both academic/athletic motivation, self-esteem,

endurance, and trust. The scoring of the original survey (Appendix V) from the first pretest is as follows:

N=8	Motivation	Self Esteem	Endurance	Trust
1	27/36 (.75) MED-HIGH	26/36 (.72) MED-HIGH	26/36 (.72) MED-HIGH	23/36 (.64) MED-LOW
2	30/36 (.83) HIGH	35/36 (.97) HIGH	32/36 (.89) HIGH	34/36 (.94) HIGH
3	26/36 (.72) MED-HIGH	25/36 (.69) MED-LOW	31/36 (.86) HIGH	32/36 (.89) HIGH
4	28/36 (.78) MED-HIGH	25/36 (.69) MED-LOW	23/36 (.64) MED-LOW	29/36 (.81) HIGH
5	25/36 (.69) MED-LOW	25/36 (.69) MED-LOW	28/36 (.78) MED-HIGH	30/36 (.83) HIGH
6	27/36 (.75) MED-HIGH	27/36 (.75) MED-HIGH	27/36 (.75) MED-HIGH	33/36 (.92) HIGH
7	24/36 (.67) MED-LOW	skipped page	18/36 (.50) LOW	skipped page
8	32/36 (.89) HIGH	33/36 (.92) HIGH	skipped page	26/36 (.72) MED-HIGH

For the second round of surf lessons, which occurred June 5th at Del Monte Beach in Monterey, five of the original eight girls returned for a lesson. There was an additional eight girls that joined the second lesson for a sample of twelve girls. The revised survey includes a space for the girls to record their ages, zip codes, and grade in school, along with their favorite sports and school subjects. The fourth section of questions, the ones designed to measure the youths trust in adults, had more questions than the other three sections. When I scored the first set of surveys, I discovered a double-barreled question that I turned into two separate questions.

The scoring of the revised survey (Appendix VI) from the second pretest is as follows:

N=12	Motivation	Self Esteem	Endurance	Trust
1 (10 yrs)	23/36 (.64) MED-LOW	22/36 (.61) MED-LOW	26/36 (.72) MED-HIGH	35/42 (.83) HIGH
2 (10 yrs)	25/36 (.69) MED-LOW	21/36 (.58) MED-LOW	29/36 (.81) HIGH	37/42 (.88) HIGH
3 (11 yrs)	27/36 (.75) MED-HIGH	25/36 (.69) MED-LOW	28/36 (.78) HIGH	38/42 (.90) HIGH
4 (12 yrs)	27/36 (.75) MED-HIGH	27/36 (.75) MED-HIGH	23/36 (.64) MED-LOW	35/42 (.83) HIGH
5 (12 yrs)	34/36 (.94) HIGH	31/36 (.86) HIGH	31/36 (.86) HIGH	39/42 (.93) HIGH
6 (13 yrs)	19/36 (.53) LOW	24/36 (.67) MED-LOW	21/36 (.58) MED-LOW	16/42 (.38) LOW
7 (13 yrs)	35.5/36 (.99) HIGH	35/36 (.97) HIGH	32/36 (.89) HIGH	38/42 (.90) HIGH
8 (13 yrs)	30/36 (.83) HIGH	29/36 (.81) HIGH	28/36 (.78) HIGH	40/42 (.95) HIGH
9 (14 yrs)	29/36 (.81) HIGH	27/36 (.75) MED-HIGH	24/36 (.67) MED-LOW	34/42 (.81) HIGH
10 (14 yrs)	33/36 (.92) HIGH	25/36 (.69) MED	28/36 (.78) MED-HIGH	38/42 (.90) HIGH
11 (14 yrs)	35/36 (.97) HIGH	35/36 (.97) HIGH	32.5/36 (.90) HIGH	42/42 (1.0) HIGH
12 (17 yrs)	25/36 (.69) MED-LOW	31/36 (.86) HIGH	31/36 (.86) HIGH	35/42 (.83) HIGH

This round of girls covered a broader age spectrum than the first round of girls, with more girls aged between 13 and 14 years old than between 11 and 12 years old. I did not ask for the ages of the girls in the first survey, but the waiver they had to sign for participation in The Wahine Project did ask for age, so I knew the age range with which I was working. Overall, Group II

had higher rates of motivation, self-esteem, endurance, and trust than Group I, with 40% of the participants being repeat students. It is possible, with a larger sample size, that surfing does, in fact, have a positive influence on a child's levels of motivation, self-esteem, endurance, and trust. The scores suggest that girls in this particular age range have a good amount of trust to place in the adults in their lives-the quality of character of those adults can and will have an impact on how they perceive those in authority over them.

In the first beach lesson, one girl left the water early because of a wipe out. It was related to me by her friends that she swallowed some salt water. This particular girl was fairly confident on land, but as we moved closer and closer to entering the water, she seemed to become increasingly introverted. Her mother, brothers, and uncle accompanied her to the beach and all were nervous about her learning to surf, but she claimed excitement. She kept her sunglasses on for the entirety of the land surf lesson--it was as if she was hiding behind them. I did not get to help her out in the water as I was working with other girls. I saw her sitting on the beach for a moment before Dionne, the founder of The Wahine Project, took her to our tent set up and helped her change out of her wetsuit. The girl left the beach early without getting a copy of The Surfer Code, which I handed out after the lesson. This girl did not return to the beach for the second surf lesson, though all of her friends did. I predict it is only a matter of time before her friends persuade her to come back to the beach and try surfing again. Enthusiasm has a way of being contagious, especially during the impressionable middle school years.

During the second beach lesson, another girl had a potentially traumatizing experience. She got caught in a rip current while taking a break from surfing. This particular girl was fairly vociferous on land and seemed to have a high level of confidence in her physical abilities, even though she was challenged by surfing. At the time she got caught in the strong ocean current, she

had yet to stand up on her board and ride a wave into shore on her feet. When I made my way to her in the impact zone, she was visibly panicked, flailing her arms, screaming for help, and crying. I swam to her and urged her to calm down and rest her arms. I put my arm around her chest under her arm pits and swam side stroke to get her into shore. She was so distressed, I thought I might have to knock her out to get her to shore safely (this is a common practice in ocean rescues if the person who needs rescuing is so panicked, helping them could mean jeopardizing your own life). She was able to follow commands, and when I told her to "Stand UP!" she did what I asked and we walked into shore. She sat for a moment on sand with another volunteer instructor and within ten minutes, she had reclaimed her surfboard and was ready to surf. I helped her into a wave and she stood up with a calmness and ease quite different from her demeanor just ten minutes prior. She rode waves on her feet for the remainder of the lesson.

This girl's behavior before getting stuck in a rip current could be characterized as brazen. She seemed to be daring the sea to put her in her place and the sea obliged. Not to say she got stuck in a rip current on purpose--the girls were educated about rip currents before their surf sessions, and this girl was at both lessons. The girls identified the rip currents before we went into the water with our surfboards and we had them describe to us how to get out of them efficiently and what NOT to do if they found themselves in a dangerous situation (panic). This girl did not behave in a way that was respectful of the sea's power and she found herself in a precarious position before she realized she was in danger.

A possible explanation for the disparity in responses to surfing observed by the first girl and the second girl may be related to their level of trust in adults and in their endurance levels during times of difficulty. The fifth tenet of The Surfer Code is: I will always always ALWAYS paddle back out. The first girl did not receive a copy of this code, but the second girl did. Girl 1

did not get the opportunity to internalize the code--to treat receipt of The Code as initiation into a "surfing tribe," which is how I described our relationship once the lesson had come to a close after the first pretest. Girl 2 did receive a Code and reported upon her arrival to the second surf lesson that it was pinned to the wall above her bed so she could read it every day. Perhaps her ability to paddle back out is what Ogilvie described in his research as the "peak experience" youth are capable of having when they feel like they have a strong hand in creating their reality (1979). Girl 2 made a choice to paddle back out despite her traumatic experience. Girl 1 seemed to succumb to the nervousness of her expectant family--it did not seem like she was given the time to consider getting back in the water before she was whisked off the beach.

CONCLUSION

There is no research out there that is like the research I want to conduct. Youth participation in sports and after school programs have been studied, but the nature of the programs studied are "conventional." Surfing seems to be the kind of sport that can be done in groups, promoting social capital, but is also an individual endeavor, promoting self-motivation, self-esteem, endurance, and trust. Because it is considered "counter-culture," surfing, even with its gain in popularity over the years, is not as pervasive in everyday life as football, basketball, and baseball (the most broadly studied sports). I think that exposure to a sport that is not widely practiced and that must be performed in a natural setting could help at risk youth increase their levels of creativity and possibly alter the trajectory of their lives. That perhaps if they are exposed to a sport they may not otherwise have access to (because they do not know any surfers or they do not live near a beach), the divergence from the norms of their lives may also provide for a variance in the way they approach and manage the every day waves of their lives.

The surfing programs highlighted in this paper are in different areas across the coasts of the United States, but they have several things in common. First, the founders of these programs are all natives of California. Mary Setterholm of The Surf Bus is from Los Angeles, Dionne Ybarra of The Wahine Project is from Salinas, and Maui Goodbear of Streetwaves is from San Diego. Second, each founder has social, cultural, and ethnical qualities in common with the populations they are intending to reach. Third, each founder's relationship with the sea and with surfing seems to be reflected in the very design of their nonprofit organization.

Setterholm was the youngest of six children and grew up in a single-parent alcoholic household. Her father was incarcerated at the time of her birth. She was subject to sexual transgressions at the hands of a babysitter and a Catholic priest when she was young. She survived domestic abuse as a married woman, and spent years raising her five children surviving on food stamps and the grace of local churches. She claims surfing and spending time in the ocean was her safe haven from the everyday atrocities of her life from the time she was 13 years old. A connection with the sea is what kept her moving forward through the gnarly waves of her life. Her favorite saying, "waves treat everyone equally--no discrimination. [People] are on the same terms as far as nature is concerned," is the philosophy that informs the teaching methods used in The Surf Bus Foundation. The students who make a total of 10 one-day visits to the beach over a period of 10 weeks are from all over Los Angeles City and County, and fit all manner of social and ethnic description.

Ybarra is of Latina descent and grew up in East Salinas. She is a recently divorced mother of three who learned to surf last year, despite being married to a surf instructor for almost 20 years. Women and Latinos are underrepresented populations in the sport of surfing. Once exposed to surfing, she looked back over the vicissitudes of her life and realized that surfing

could help girls from her old neighborhood navigate through the challenges in their lives EARLIER rather than later. Her goal for the girls she wishes to reach is to "catch" any potential missed opportunities. Though East Salinas is a merely a few miles from the nearest beach, it is a world away in terms of social development (i.e. exposure to surf attitudes and culture).

Goodbear is an African-American male and transplant from California to Florida. While men dominate the sport of surfing, like women and Latinos, African-Americans are another underrepresented population out in the line up. His younger brother was shot and killed by a teenage gang member in their home town of San Diego, and Goodbear has not been back since. A solitary paddle out was the pivotal moment for Goodbear, in the midst of his grief, he saw young boys playing in waves on surfboards instead of playing on streets with guns.

My personal involvement with The Surf Bus Foundation provided the inspiration for this research proposal. I want to use The Surf Bus Foundation, The Wahine Project, and Streetwaves to reach the populations I seek to study. I am not proposing, necessarily, on evaluating each program for its effectiveness, but rather, I want to utilize all three programs as a way to increase the sample size and to see if surfing transcends demographics. The methods I want to use do include an evaluation, but it is of Surf Academy's traditional surf camp style (Appendices II, III, IV), which is a program developed as a for profit surf school. Surf Academy has proved successful over the last 11 years of its existence in teaching thousands of children to surf and helping them foster a sustained interest in the sport. I think one of the Surf Academy's successes with children is the enthusiasm of its staff, its well organized protocols, and the length and duration of the camp. After combing through research on after school and sports oriented programs for youth, I believe that immersion in the sport of surfing could serve to address some

of the weaknesses that other researchers have found in their own studies about youth

development.

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