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# The Heart of Basketball: A Dynamic and Transformative Program Design for Chinese Youth

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# The Heart of Basketball



The Heart of Basketball: A Dynamic and Transformative Program Design for Chinese Youth

Jayson Gilbert

PIM 75

A capstone paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

May 2017

Advisor: Mokhtar Bouba

The Heart of Basketball

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Date: May 25, 2017

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And lastly, I would like to thank my advisor Mokhtar Boubou for his patience, calm demeanor, and deeply insightful guidance during the reflective practice process and up to the final moments of this capstone project.

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## ABSTRACT

Chinese participation in educational overseas programs has steadily increased over the past several years. Chinese parents and youth see these types of programs, specifically short-term programs, as a means to gain exposure to a foreign country and its culture before possibly studying in that country. This capstone paper explores the value of such programs by examining their long-term impact while considering other factors that may influence Chinese desire to participate in these programs.

The research in this paper reveals that overseas youth programs that incorporate sound pedagogy and elements of experiential learning in their design have potential to be successful in creating the meaningful intercultural experiences that Chinese parents and their children seek in short-term overseas programs. Furthermore, a program that recognizes cultural interests that appeal to Chinese youth have the potential to be successful.

The findings in this capstone paper support the development of The Heart of Basketball; a short-term overseas youth program that promotes personal development and cross-cultural competencies in its participants via a basketball-based pedagogy. A partnership with an American high school opens the door to the school's internationalization efforts and fulfills the participants' parents' preference that their children experience the culture of the region in which they intend to send their child to study in the future.

Keywords: China, youth programs, experiential learning, basketball, internationalization

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background Information**

When I was a student at the College of Charleston (CofC) in Charleston, South Carolina (SC) I had the opportunity to participate in the college's study abroad program in Santiago, Chile. In hindsight, I realize how significant this intercultural experience was for me. I was not fully aware of how deeply the experience would affect me in the long-term, however, it undoubtedly set me on a course that would lead me to where I presently find myself.

After graduating from CofC, I continued seeking opportunities to satisfy my curiosity for learning about world cultures by serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia and Colombia, collaborating with Japanese Teachers of English as an Assistant Language Teacher in public schools in Japan's countryside, and leading an immersion trip for a group of high school students from the U.S. exploring the south of Spain. Domestically, my involvement in international education has allowed me to learn from and work with diverse individuals through teaching ESL with programs designed for grade school and university students, teaching Spanish in high schools, and facilitating short-term programs that provide opportunities for its participants to have intercultural experiences. Holding leadership positions in these programs allowed me to accomplish two goals:

1. to expand my knowledge of world cultures
2. to facilitate the learning process of students

I have benefited immensely from my involvement in each of the programs I have had the fortune of being a part of. I strongly believe that they provided invaluable opportunities for personal growth and intercultural understanding. My front-row-seat observations as a participant and facilitator in these programs have given me a unique perspective on how intentionally

designing, facilitating, and leading programs can create meaningful intercultural experiences that have potential to bring about positive change through their participants.

Ultimately, the culmination of the aforementioned experiences and the impact of many other factors served as the impetus for my desire to gain a broader understanding of topics in the field of international education. With that new knowledge, I would be able to more effectively influence and encourage others to pursue paths that would perhaps lead them to a better understanding of how they too can strengthen relations among global communities while developing cross-cultural competence. Therefore, after approximately thirteen years of experience as a global educator, I enrolled in SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont (VT) to make further strides towards accomplishing this new goal.

While preparing my “Professional Goal Statement” at the start of the semester as part of the required Learning Plan, it became apparent to me that the wide range of my interests might benefit from concentrating on SIT’s self-guided Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management (ISLM) program. This would give me the flexibility I needed to cover topics in courses I felt were relevant to my professional trajectory. An excerpt from my Learning Plan states:

“I greatly enjoy sharing knowledge and information with others in an effort to make sure they are prepared for opportunities overseas, be they study abroad, work abroad, volunteer abroad, etc. Therefore, I realize that I feel more drawn to being a cultural trainer. This could be as a Peace Corps Trainer developing effective in-country training sessions or in the private sector working as a trainer/language teacher for those preparing for work overseas as an expatriate. Working with a university’s study abroad office is not completely off the table but my main aspirations are the aforementioned.”

Arriving at this pivotal moment gave me clarity in narrowing my post-grad school pursuits to four specific possibilities:

- 1) work as a Foreign Service Officer (FSO) with the State Department



- 2) work as a member of a university's study abroad department
- 3) work as a trainer with Peace Corps
- 4) start an international education driven company

The foundational courses, aptly named Foundations I and Foundations II, immediately set the tone for building capacities for working in multicultural settings. Beyond Foundations I and II, courses such as Budgeting and Financial Management, Marketing, and Social Entrepreneurship facilitated my understanding of the business side of operating an organization. Other courses such as International Education Policy and Theory and Practice of International Education would foster an understanding of political and historical events that help explain the current state of the field of international education. However, two courses specifically have had a great impact on the direction in which I presently see myself heading as a professional: Leading and Managing Social Sector Organizations (LMSSO) and Training Design and Delivery for Experiential Learning (TDEL).

In LMSSO I was able to become familiar with a number of mission-driven and values-based cases, frameworks, and approaches that raised my awareness of the characteristics that many effective leaders and organizations possess. The course also stressed the importance of an organization to continuously be conscious of their mission as it is the statement that should guide all of its activities. It is their reason for existing. Among the many concepts studied in LMSSO, this notion in particular was the main takeaway for me. It made me reflect on the various organizations I have been a part of and made me question whether or not I thought this could be applied to them. It also made me think about the intentionality that must be considered when an individual or group of individuals is drafting a mission statement upon which to build an organization.

TDEL provided me the opportunity to learn and practice using experiential learning in training design and facilitation. During the course, we explored training and learning in the context of our diverse cultural backgrounds and considered how and whether our training addresses particular needs for individuals with diverse learning style preferences. TDEL greatly increased my awareness of the numerous factors to consider when designing and implementing an effective program. Like LMSSO, I was able to reflect on past experiences as a teacher and trainer, building on the expertise I brought to the classroom and experimenting with new concepts.

After many hours of in-class discussions and countless conversations with classmates about how to put our passions into practice, I finished the on-campus phase of graduate school with the idea to collaborate with fellow PIM 75 cohort member, Tai Mesches, to create a dynamic youth program. Relying on Mesches to take the pedagogical lead in the future creation of a youth program, I would focus on the organizational aspects of operating as youth program provider during my practicum experience.

### **Learnings from the Practice Sites**

My practicum was completed in two parts: first, by working as a facilitator with two summer youth programs, then, by working as a team member at a language services company in Charlotte, North Carolina (NC). My position as a facilitator with youth programs was carried out with the Governor's Institute of Vermont's (GIV) Summer Program on Current Issues and Youth Activism, held on the campus of SIT in Brattleboro, VT. A little over a week later I was also a facilitator for World Learning's Summer Leadership Program for Cuban Youth, which took place over the span of four weeks in various locations that include: Syria, Virginia (VA), Charlottesville, VA, Portland, Oregon (OR), and Washington DC. Working as a facilitator for

these two world-class summer youth programs proved incredibly insightful in that I was able to observe how youth programs operated at the managerial and at the facilitation levels.

From the managerial point of view, it was necessary that the program directors instilled confidence in the abilities of the program facilitators to accomplish their duties. This was done by recognizing each facilitator as a professional who was hired because of the talent they had demonstrated in previous positions and by acknowledging facilitators for doing good work. Additionally, open communication and frequent feedback was given during the daily team meetings before the start of the day, creating a collaborative culture to which each team member felt free to contribute.

As a facilitator, I observed how too much programming could interfere with the participants' ability to process all of the information that was presented to them. This made me reflect on my various positions as a teacher in the past. I could plan a lesson that I believed would be very effective because of the intentionality of each activity in the lesson plan. However, on many occasions I was not able to get to some parts of the lesson due to underestimating the time it would take my students to process the new material. At other times it was a matter of recognizing that the students were very much engaged in a particular part of the lesson plan and having the flexibility to improvise in that moment to not lose that momentum. Many youth programs are designed to keep their participants very busy as not to allow them to get distracted, which is understandable and to be expected with this particular age group. Nevertheless, observing this reminded me of the necessity of dialogue and check-ins with program participants as a way to process new learning. This can also serve as a tool to collectively gauge the efficacy of a program's design.

Apart from working as a facilitator for youth programs, I was able to gain entrepreneurial insight with The Language Academy of the Carolinas located in Charlotte, NC. The Language Academy started as a very small company with its founder and president, Craig Snyder, offering Spanish classes in his mother's house at her dining room table. Eventually, as he gained more clients he sought a larger space. Growth continued and Snyder would begin offering classes for languages other than Spanish. Currently, The Language Academy not only offers language courses but also interpretation and translation services, cultural training, and opportunities for educational trips abroad where clients are able to learn and experience the language they study. It has been ranked as the Charlotte area's premier language academy. The Language Academy's story is an incredible representation of what can happen when one pursues their passion.

Working at The Language Academy inspired me to begin making steps towards creating my own entrepreneurial venture. During my practicum with The Language Academy, I focused on picking up technical skills like website creation, basic coding, and learning effective marketing strategies.

Overall, the practicum phase gave me the confidence to say that I, too, could create and run a high quality youth program. This required that I ask myself a few questions before embarking on this path. Would I approach building a program alone? Who could I potentially partner with to create a program? What would be the goal of the program? What aspects of the program would attract the attention of potential participants? How would I convince the participants' parents that their child's involvement in the program would be worthwhile and enjoyable? What would be required to create the program from an entrepreneurial perspective? What financial risks are involved?

Not too long after completing the practicum requirements I began taking steps to answer these questions by collaborating with Tai Mesches, as previously mentioned. We sought to figure out how to design and implement an impactful two-week summer youth program that brings high school-age boys from Shenzhen, China to the Washington DC area, with the aim of strengthening the relationship between the youth from the two international communities. The program would provide opportunities for the participants to improve basketball skills while fostering personal growth and building cross-cultural competency through a basketball-based pedagogy that creates impactful intercultural experiences.

Early exposure to world cultures prepares youth with the foundational tools that will allow them to recognize and appreciate the differences that make us all unique. As a youth growing up in a rural town in South Carolina, I was not fully aware of how vastly different the lives of others were outside of my hometown, much less outside of my home country. However, specific experiences during that time period that range from having dinner with a Mexican family, celebrating holidays with a Korean family, and becoming friends with an exchange student from Belgium attending my high school were all important events that I still remember today. As a result of those experiences, I became more open to engaging with others who represented cultures unlike my own. For this reason, I have found that it is important to establish these types of connections during the early developmental stages of young peoples' lives. Meaningful interactions with those who are different from us are the building blocks that facilitate cross-cultural understanding and have the potential to strengthen relationships between communities. Thus, the creation of the previously mentioned summer youth program that would become to known as The Heart of Basketball (HOB).

This capstone paper provides the organizational research that supports the development of HOB. With this paper, I intend to explore the value of short-term overseas programs, to discuss Chinese involvement in such programs, and to describe the components that constitute HOB.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Rationale for Overseas Programs**

The need to provide individuals with opportunities to learn about different cultures has been widely-recognized as a necessity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Not only does cultural knowledge increase employment marketability, it also makes people aware of the diverse world in which we live. Much of the current polarization and blatant discrimination against others can be attributed to deficiencies in cross-cultural understanding. In a continuous effort to promote cross-cultural understanding, many governments, independent organizations, and educational institutions seek to make global education accessible through a variety of means that include language classes, designated cultural events and festivals, and education abroad programs. The latter provides a distinct and unique opportunity to experience a foreign culture over an extended or short period of time. These programs typically range from being a year long, a semester long, or short-term in duration, typically lasting between two weeks and one month. Attempts to measure the impacts of these programs rely heavily on anecdotal feedback received shortly after program completion and on scarce empirical data. Mary M. Dwyer alludes to this dearth of quantitative research in her study on the impact of program duration as it relates to study abroad (Dwyer, 2004). Dwyer notes that of the many studies on the effects of study abroad, none of them measured its the long-term impact (Dwyer, 2004).

### **Impact of Overseas Programs**

Short-term programs are a more convenient and affordable option for some that can serve as a catalyst for deep interpersonal growth and for broadening world views. But does program length influence the impact the program has on the participant? It could be argued that the longer the duration of the program, the better the outcome will be. However, measuring these outcomes can be difficult due to the intangible nature of the expected results. Moreover, there is countless anecdotal evidence that suggests that duration alone is not the sole factor that determines the impact of an overseas program. For example, before returning to Scotland after spending just two weeks in Laurinburg, NC as a participant in an exchange program, high school student James McIntyre stated:

“I feel like it makes you respect people a lot more. You realized they live a different way of life and you learn to respect their choices and they might be the same as you, but you learn to take that into consideration. Just being around and getting to know different people is really helpful” (Hatten, 2016).

Another program participant, Lucy Hennessy, simply stated that “It just broadens your horizons” (Hatten, 2016). The two anecdotal examples that represent the sentiments of these two program participants suggest that the impact of a program that lasts just two weeks can have a positive impact on an individual.

As it relates to the scarce empirical data on the affects of short-term programs, some researchers have found that the duration of the program is not that significant in measuring impact. In perhaps the first-ever large-scale survey on the long-term impact of study abroad, Dwyer, president of The Institute for the International Education of Students (IES Abroad) found that “...study abroad positively and unequivocally influences the career path, world-view, and self-confidence of students” (Dwyer, n.d.). IES Abroad collected data from surveys completed by alumni who participated in all of their study abroad programs between the years 1950 and

1999 (Dwyer, n.d.). The findings from IES Abroad's survey that garnered data from roughly 3,400 alumni (a response rate of 23%) showed that "regardless of where students studied and for how long... studying abroad is usually a defining moment in a young person's life and continues to impact the participant's life for years after the experience" (Dwyer, n.d.).

Dwyer's findings sharply contrast with those of researchers David Bachner and Ulrich Zeuschel. While Dwyer concluded that study abroad strongly influenced the career paths of its participants, Bachner and Zeuschel found that "academic or professional direction is not influenced as a result of exchange, nor is involvement with subsequent exchanges typical" (Dwyer, n.d.; MacMurdo, 2013, p. 13). This conclusion was reached by authors Bachner and Zeuschel in the analysis of their follow-up with participants in Youth for Understanding (YFU), an intercultural exchange program for high school students (MacMurdo, 2013). Bachner and Zeuschel analyzed the long-term affects on youth from the U.S. and Germany who participated in the program between the 1950s and the 1980s using surveys and autobiographical interviews (MacMurdo, 2013). They divided the affects of the YFU program into eight categories:

1. Overall Satisfaction/Success of the Exchange
2. Individual Changes Associated with Exchange
3. Utilization & Ripple Effects of Exchange
4. Involvement in Exchange-Related/International Activities Since the Exchange
5. Educational and Professional Directions Attributed to the Exchange
6. Bilateral (U.S.-German) Perspective and Involvement Since the Exchange
7. Multilateral Perspective and Involvement Since the Exchange (Globalism)
8. Evaluation of YFU Program (MacMurdo, 2013, p.13)

Bachner and Zeuschel noted that some of the difficulties in measuring the affect of youth exchange programs lies in the complexities of the influencing factors that include: gender, age, program goals, program design, sponsorship, duration of program, and historical time period



(MacMurdo, 2013). However, one factor in particular was found to be heavily influential: the experience with the host family (MacMurdo, 2013). This component of an exchange program typically creates positive and long-lasting change according to Bachner and Zeutschel (MacMurdo, 2013).

Susan Carley and R. Keith Tudor (2006) noted in their research on assessing the impact of short-term programs that using tools such as the cross-cultural adaptability inventory<sup>1</sup> has aided some researchers in determining the effect of short-term programs, but that more empirical data is needed to address the merit of these programs. Nevertheless, in their research, Carley and Tudor (2006) found that a two-week study tour in Mexico “had a measurable impact on students’ perceptions of the host country and its people” (p. 14) when they compared the participants’ views of Mexico before and after the program. They would go on to state that the program participants “came to note that Mexicans as a population were not really that different from the ‘folks back home’” (Carley & Tudor, 2006, p. 14). Carley and Tudor (2006) concluded from their research findings that participating in an overseas program as short as two weeks has an important impact on international learning. Furthermore, they feel confident that their findings are “a positive early step in exploring the impact of short-duration programs” (Carley & Tudor, 2006, p. 14). The results from their studies were also consistent with the objectives of the two-week course in that a greater global awareness and appreciation was created in the students who participated in the program that took place in Mexico (Carley & Tudor, 2006).

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<sup>1</sup> The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) is a self-scoring assessment that can help facilitate the transition into new or different surroundings ([www.ccaiassess.com](http://www.ccaiassess.com)).

## **Program Design**

As Carley and Tudor (2006) discovered, the objectives of a program should guide the expected outcome. When there are discrepancies between program objectives and its intended results, program creators may need to focus on design. University of California – Davis Program Coordinator and Advisor, Aspen Felt, found this to be necessary after facilitating the youth program, Emerging Youth Leaders (EYL), carried out by AYUSA Global Youth Exchange and funded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) (Felt, 2011). After noticing the program’s lack of pre-departure and re-entry orientations and lack of components of experiential education, Felt redesigned the program in a way that enhanced participatory learning and developed cross-cultural skills within the participants through engagement with the host culture (Felt, 2011). Felt recognizes that the program design will continue to evolve and believes that the redesign that was implemented will serve AYUSA and its participants well in the future (Felt, 2011).

## **China’s Appetite for Overseas Programs**

Chinese participation in overseas youth programs has steadily increased over the past 10 years (Zhang, 2015). In 2012, China spent \$1 billion USD on overseas youth programs and just two years later spent \$300 million USD more (Zhang, 2015). Several factors have influenced China’s increase in participation, which include but aren’t limited to a recognition of the value of intercultural experiences and a growing middle-class with more disposable income.

### *Intercultural Experiences*

One of the most prevalent themes found in literature on Chinese participation in overseas programs is the acknowledgement of the value of intercultural experiences through travel. The current generation of parents in China has realized the significance of fostering their child’s

creativity through gaining intercultural experience and seek out opportunities to achieve this through overseas programs and enrollment in Western educational institutions (Zhang, 2015). According to Brook Larmer's article titled "The Parachute Generation" in The New York Times Magazine, Chinese parents are concerned that their children's creativity has been stifled by the often-cited rote memorization style of learning that schools in China have implemented for years (Larmer, 2017). This traditional style of education is no longer satisfying the expectations of Chinese parents (Zhang, 2015). Therefore, they seek to send their children on overseas programs at early ages to take advantage of a more "liberal" form of education (Zhang, 2015).

For some Chinese parents, these programs are seen as a way "to see if their children can adopt the destination culture, so they can send their children to study in those countries in the future" (Zhang, 2015, p. 21). "Parents realize that they have to start earlier if they want their children to get into a top U.S. university" says Nini Suet, founder of a boutique consultancy headquartered in Beijing, China that assists with the preparation and application for American boarding schools (Larmer, 2017). Statistically, between 2005 and 2014, the Chinese student population enrolled in American boarding schools increased 60-fold from 641 students to almost 40,000 (Larmer, 2017). Additionally, 83% of China's upper-class plans to send their children abroad for high school (Larmer, 2017). The average age for these children has dropped from its 2014 average of 18 years old to its current average of 16 years old - making it the first time that the average age has reached the high school level (Larmer, 2017).

Suet goes on to note that "families are looking for any edge they can get" to increase the chances that their children ultimately be accepted to an American university as a foreign university degree is believed to be extremely important by some Chinese parents (Larmer, 2017; Zhao, 2011).

As overseas programs provide opportunities for participants to gain language proficiency and cross-cultural competence, a skill and quality that many Western educational institutions expect from international students in the year 2017, it may be correct to assume that participation in overseas programs can potentially boost the likelihood that Chinese children be accepted to Western high schools and universities.

### *More Disposable Income*

A continually growing middle-class is another theme that is frequently mentioned in the conversation on the respective participation and enrollment of Chinese youth in overseas programs and in Western educational institutions. With a surge in disposable income for many Chinese families, some families will pay consultancies up to \$40,000 USD to help their child prepare and apply for admittance to an American high school (Larmer, 2017). To some, the price tag is worth it as it is a way to “escape the competitive straightjacket of the Chinese education system” (Larmer, 2017).

Aside from the competition that exists within the Chinese education system, there is another form of competition that has sprung from Chinese parents’ desire to send their children on overseas programs. In Qian Zhang’s research on overseas programs, he describes this competition as “conspicuous consumption” that “may be an important factor in parents’ decision-making” as it relates to sending their child on an overseas program (Zhang, 2015, p. 12). An excerpt from Zhang’s research reads:

“Parents would like their friends and relatives to consider them as good or wealthy. Parents can show-off to their relatives and friends about how much money they spend on their children’s trips. In addition, after the children come back, they may have a chance to show-off their children’s trips and the outcome of the trip, for instance, inter-cultural experiences, improvement in foreign language skills, or visiting the world’s top-10 universities. Therefore, overseas youth camps for parents would be a conspicuous consumption” (Zhang, 2015, p. 12).

Four years prior to Zhang's research, the director of the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange, Bai Zhangde, suggested that parents "stop trying to out-do each other, and adopt a more rational attitude toward sending their young children to study abroad" with regards to "conspicuous consumption" (Zhao, 2011). However, after a quantitative approach to investigate the matter of "conspicuous consumption's" relation to parents' desire to send their children on overseas programs, Zhang found that there was a negative correlation between the two (Zhang, 2015). His research findings indicated that value was placed on the educational aspect of overseas programs and that it is considered an investment in their child's future, not in social status (Zhang, 2015).

While the reality of an increase of disposable income is true for some, it should be noted that many Chinese families who are not represented by this segment of the population have made great sacrifices in order to provide their children with an educational opportunity that will hopefully lead to a better future. In Frank Shyong's (2015) article titled "Not Only China's Wealthy Want to Study in America," published by The L.A. Times, he reports that a growing number of Chinese youth from lower middle class-families are looking for alternatives to "an overcrowded and unforgiving Chinese educational system."

Given the cultural expectation in China that children will one day take care of their parents in their latter years, having a solid educational foundation is believed to be a wise strategy that puts their children in a position that could ensure that they will have the financial resources to do so.

#### *From the Child's Perspective*

Much focus has been placed on the parents' perspective, but what do the children, also known as "The Parachute Generation", think about spending long periods of time away from

home? Do they have any say in the matter? In Xiaoxia Zhao's article in *The People's Daily*, China's largest newspaper group, she asserts that many children have been "forced" to study abroad (Zhao, 2011). Chinese student, Xao Wang, who went to study in the UK during the summer of 2011 stated, "Actually, I do not want to study abroad, but my parents want me to. They will be sad and disappointed if I do not go" (Zhao, 2011). Unfortunately, this type of pressure can have a negative affect on the child's experience overseas, resulting in an outcome that greatly contrasts with the parents' initial purpose for sending their child overseas. In explaining his personal reason for sending his son to a U.S. high school, a father from Shenyang, China stated that he did not do it just for the prestige or so that his son would have an advantage for a future job (Larmer, 2017). "I also want my son to understand, in a way that I never could," he said, "that the world is bigger than Shenyang, bigger than China" (Larmer, 2017). It could be argued that sentiment expands beyond China and is a shared feeling held by parents all around the world who also want their children to have a brighter future.

## THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The Heart of Basketball's (HOB) intentional pedagogy is primarily based on John Wooden's Pyramid of Success. Additionally, youth dialogue techniques derived from John Ungerleider's dialogue facilitator's manual "Let's Talk About It" are incorporated. To facilitate the learning process, HOB utilizes David Kolb's Model for Experiential Learning.

### **John Wooden's Pyramid of Success**

*"Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming."* – John Wooden (Wooden, 2007, p. 33)

John Wooden is widely recognized as *the* greatest coach in college basketball history. Over a span of twelve years, Wooden won 10 NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association)

championship titles. Of those ten, 7 were consecutive NCAA championship wins. This feat has never been repeated. Wooden's success as a basketball coach is directly linked to a philosophy he began to create after becoming frustrated as a high school English teacher, seeing parents criticizing their children for not receiving receiving top grades on assignments (Wooden, 2007, p. 31). This compelled Wooden to redefine how "success" was understood and after fifteen years of development, he introduced a framework that would subsequently guide many athletes, and others, to success on the court and in everyday life (Wooden, 2007). Below are the 15 personal qualities reflected in The Pyramid of Success and a brief description of their meaning as defined by Wooden:

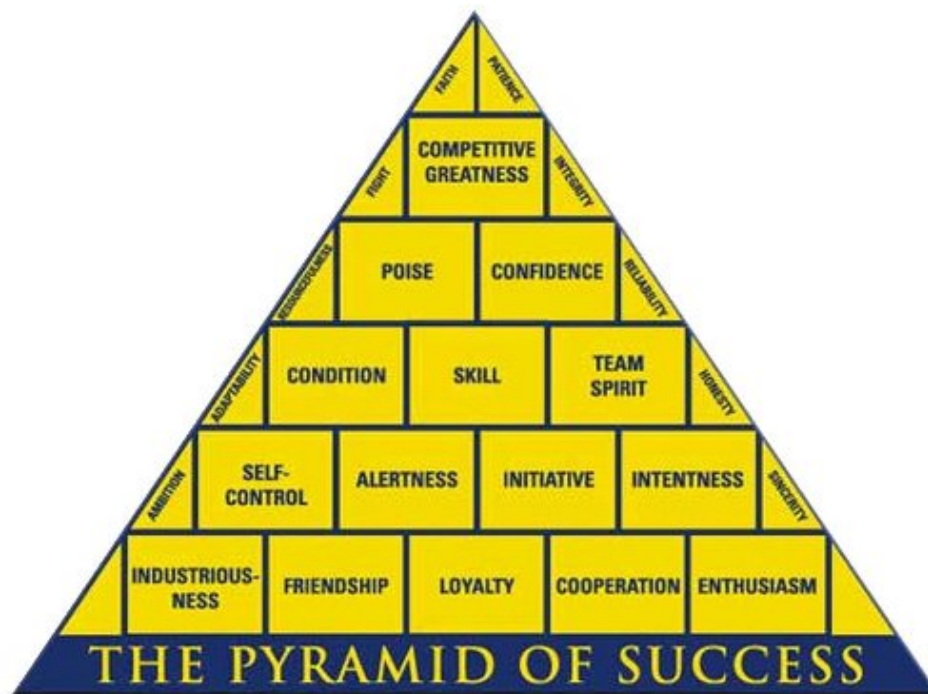
1. **Industriousness** – There is no substitute for work. Worthwhile things come from hard work and careful planning.
2. **Friendship** – Comes from mutual esteem, respect, and devotion.
3. **Loyalty** – To yourself and to all those dependent upon you. Keep your self-respect.
4. **Cooperation** – With all levels of your co-workers. Help others and see the other side.
5. **Enthusiasm** – Your heart must be in the work. Stimulate others.
6. **Self-control** – Emotions under control. Delicate adjustment between mind and body. Keep judgement and common sense.
7. **Alertness** – Be observing constantly. Be quick to spot a weakness and correct it or use it as the case may warrant.
8. **Initiative** – Cultivate the ability to make decisions and think alone. Desire to excel.
9. **Intentness** – Ability to resist temptation and stay with your course. Concentrate on your objective and be determined to reach your goal.
10. **Condition** – Mental, moral, and physical. Rest, exercise, and diet must be considered. Moderation must be practiced. Dissipation must be eliminated.
11. **Skill** – A knowledge of and the ability to properly execute the fundamentals. Be prepared. Cover every detail.

12. **Team Spirit** – An eagerness to sacrifice personal interests or glory for the welfare of all. The team comes first.

13. **Poise** – Just bring yourself. Being at ease in any situation. Never fighting yourself.

14. **Confidence** – Respect without fear. Confident not cocky. May come from faith in yourself in knowing that you are prepared.

15. **Competitive Greatness** – “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” Be at your best when your best is needed. Real love of a hard battle.  
(Wooden, 2007, pp. 36-46)



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Some notable individuals who attribute many of their accomplishments to The Pyramid of Success include former athletes who played under Wooden at the collegiate level. Both Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Bill Walton played for Coach Wooden at UCLA and went on to have wildly successful careers as professional basketball players in the NBA (National Basketball Association). Both men were eventually inducted into The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall



of Fame and credit the application of The Pyramid of Success in their lives for some of their greatest achievements (Edelhauser, 2007).

The Pyramid has also benefited individuals outside of basketball. Former UCLA Bruin and businessman John Vallely credits The Pyramid with helping him and his family cope with the loss of his daughter who died of cancer at the age of twelve. Vallely says that “This whole idea of the Pyramid of Success doesn't mean that you're always going to win. With my daughter, we had a sense of peace that we'd given it everything that we could give. But in that part of our life adventure, we had run up against an opponent we couldn't defeat” (Edelhauser, 2007).

Vallely also relied on the principles of The Pyramid later in his life during his own health battle with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. Vallely said that “When I was competing against a life-threatening disease, and I couldn't move because I was so sick from all the chemotherapy, somehow I finally learned that it wasn't about winning a basketball game; it was about feeling happy that I had lived a full life and had experienced success in my marriage and in my experience as a father” (Edelhauser, 2007). Vallely has said that his experience with Coach Wooden and The Pyramid of Success taught and prepared him “to go out to the world outside sports and help change the lives of kids who are fighting an enemy they can't see” (Reid, 2015).

Organizations such as Harper for Kids (HFK) have recognized the value in John Wooden's Pyramid of Success as well and are using it as a tool for youth character development in grade schools in California (Harper for Kids, 2016). HFK has been implemented in 75 schools in California and report that 70% to 80% of the schools that have adapted the program have seen a reduction in negative behavior in their students according to a recent case study (Harper for Kids, 2016).

## Youth Dialogue

*“Dialogue is an art that teaches us to listen deeply, speak openly, and discover our common ground.”* - Dr. Paula Green, Professor Emerita, School for International Training (Ungerleider, 2016, p. 3)

The importance of dialogue should not be underestimated during the learning process. Through dialogue, individuals are able to engage in a form of experiential learning in an interconnected way that has potential to unearth feelings and ideas within us and in others. In John Ungerleider’s guide to leading youth dialogue, he presents principles, structures, and activities that can enhance the participants’ experience through dialogue (Ungerleider, 2016). Ungerleider explains the facilitation process by breaking down the “How” and “What” that lead to successful dialogues.

### *The “How”*

Ungerleider breaks down the “How” into five steps he calls “The 5 B’s”:

1. **Break** the Ice
2. **Build** Communication Skills
3. **Bring** People Together
4. **Brainstorm** Group Norms
5. **Balance** Participation (Ungerleider, 2016, p. 13)

In the “break the ice” stage, relationships are established through group activities that allow the group members to share in a light-hearted way (Ungerleider, 2016). Once the participants feel more relaxed after experiencing the first stage, they begin to “build communication skills” that emphasize the importance of listening to each other and speaking without restraints (Ungerleider, 2016).

“Bringing people together” is done through creating a physical space that is safe and inclusive (Ungerleider, 2016). This is typically done by sitting in a close circle so that each person can be seen and heard. Once participants are brought together “brainstorming group norms” should occur (Ungerleider, 2016). In this stage, the group agrees on positive group behavior and attitudes that will promote constructive dialogue (Ungerleider, 2016). It is suggested that these “norms” be written down and posted for reference should dialogue deviate from what has been established.

Lastly, the dialogue facilitators will need to “balance participation” (Ungerleider, 2016). Facilitators must be mindful of the time, who is and is not speaking, the flow of the dialogue, the language being used, the reflection of ideas, the management of emotions, and the management of the conclusion, which should end the dialogue on a positive note (Ungerleider, 2016).

### *The “What”*

The “what” to facilitating dialogues relates to the structure of the content. Facilitators should select appropriate topics that are relevant to the participants beforehand or guide the group to selecting a topic they feel they would like to discuss (Ungerleider, 2016). Once trust has been established by taking the group through “The 5 B’s” this process can begin.

### **Kolb’s Model for Experiential Learning**

To understand Kolb’s Model for Experiential Learning it may be necessary to first define the term “experiential learning.” Its definition may vary slightly among academics, but for the purposes of this paper, experiential learning should be understood as:

“... learning from experience or learning by doing. Experiential education first immerses learners in an experience and then encourages reflection about the experience to develop new skills, new attitudes, or new ways of thinking.” (Lewis, L.H. & Williams, C.J., 1994, p. 5).

HOB utilizes Kolb's Model for Experiential Learning to facilitate the learning process for its program participants. At the heart of the model are four learning modes that address individual learning style preferences: reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, active experimentation, and concrete experience (Brooks-Harris & Stock-Ward, 1999).



In the reflective observation phase, participants become motivated and are reminded of what they already know (Brooks-Harris & Stock-Ward, 1999). This typically occurs at the beginning of a program. HOB's participants bring their own experiences and will share them via structured dialogue and in digital form so that the program facilitators can gauge and make necessary modifications to the programming if necessary.

The nature of the abstract conceptualization phase may be more didactic in its approach as it is designed to introduce ideas and concepts that may be new for the participants (Brooks-Harris & Stock-Ward, 1999). HOB participants begin to learn what The Pyramid is during this phase.

To put the newly acquired learning of the foundational blocks of The Pyramid into practice, participants will enter the active experimentation phase of the model. This phase exposes learners to a learning process that is tactile and kinetic in nature.

The concrete experience phase involves planning and preparation for the future (Brooks-Harris & Stock-Ward, 1999). The idea of this phase is for the participants to ponder over how the learnings from the program could be applied in their lives once the program is over.

According to Brooks-Harris and Stock-Ward (1999), it is important to consider the participants cultural background and other aspects of identity when developing workshops. Although the program's principal participants are from a culture different from that of the creator of the learning model, HOB believes it can still be effectively applied.

The role of the facilitator in the application of Kolb's Model is perhaps the most important piece. Brooks-Harris and Stock-Ward (1999) believe that "experiential education and the accompanying facilitator role represent a paradigm shift that can revolutionize the way people learn" (p. 8). In experiential learning, the facilitator "is likely to be an encourager and a colearner as well as teacher" (Brooks-Harris & Stock-Ward, 1999, p. 8). This style of education breaks from the traditional and addresses the needs of diverse learners.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Heart of Basketball (HOB) is a two-week youth program that seeks to bring a group of 10 to 12 high school-age boys from Shenzhen, China to the Washington DC area to have a transformative intercultural experience using a basketball-based pedagogy derived from legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden's Pyramid of Success. By bringing together youth who share a common passion for basketball, HOB seeks to introduce its participants to the 15 personal qualities that lead to success as defined by John Wooden.

### **Needs Assessment**

*"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can*

*create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers.” (Nelson Mandela, 2000)*

Nelson Mandela’s words during his speech at the first Laureus World Sports Awards in Manaco ring true seventeen years later. The recent increase in divisive speech in the U.S. has created a lot of tension that is based on lack of understanding of those who represent different cultures and values. It may be safe to assume that this is occurring in other nations of the world as well.

HOB believes that the need for programs that take a holistic approach to developing cross-cultural competence and personal development in youth are vital. Literature also suggest that these types are programs are needed to provide an alternative to the traditional style of education as it relates to China. In both cases, HOB hopes to play a role in strengthening the relationship between the international communities involved with the program using the power of sport.

### **Program Goals**

- To develop a higher level of basketball skills in the program participants
- To develop cross-cultural competence in the program participants through meaningful intercultural experiences
- To facilitate the personal growth of the participants using John Wooden’s Pyramid of Success

### **Program Objectives**

- To provide participants with quality-efficient basketball drills, trainings, and recreational games to improve athletic ability and health
- To enhance participants’ cross-cultural competence and English-speaking skills by engaging with local DC communities and schools

- To boost participants' confidence and character development through community building activities based on experiential learning and dialogue facilitation

### **Marketing/Recruitment**

HOB's target market is the high school-age boy from Shenzhen, China who is passionate about basketball. Marketing the program to this demographic will be equally as important as marketing the program to their parents, who in most cases are the ones who are financially responsible for their child and who ultimately make the final decision regarding their participation in the program.

In marketing to the high school-age boys, HOB will rely on the incessant growth of basketball's popularity in China. The NBA and the CBA's (Chinese Basketball Association) collaboration in growing the sport in China continues to attract more and more youth everyday. Viewership of NBA games saw a spike in the early 2000s with the introduction of now retired Hall of Fame NBA basketball player from China, Yao Ming. Even more recently, another NBA basketball player of Chinese ancestry, Jeremy Lin, increased Chinese viewership and participation in basketball after his wildly successful run with the New York Knicks basketball team. Both current and retired NBA players have taken advantage of China's passion for the sport and have had much success in capitalizing on this market. Furthermore, the opportunity to visit the capital of the U.S. is an attractive feature that many Chinese youths.

In marketing to the parents, HOB understands Chinese parents' desire to send their children overseas for summer programs. For some parents, the option to have their children involved in any summer program away from home is sufficient. Other parents may be more interested in the value a program will offer their child. As mentioned earlier in this paper, some Chinese parents look for programs that offer a more "liberal" form of education. For this reason,

HOB considers its pedagogy a powerful marketing tool. Like many other youth summer program providers, HOB focuses on basketball skill-building. However, what distinguishes HOB from other programs is its holistic approach to not just developing a more skilled basketball player, but also developing personal growth in its participants via sound practices of experiential learning theory. Furthermore, in what could possibly be described as an influence from W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne's Blue Ocean Strategy, HOB sees the competition as irrelevant and focuses on what makes itself unique.

Other features that will be emphasized for marketing HOB to youth and their parents are the following components:

- Dynamic basketball training sessions
- English language immersion
- meaningful interactions with host community
- host family stay
- DC sightseeing
- activities with a U.S. high school

Recruiting participants for HOB requires that the candidates:

- have foundational basketball skills, experience playing with a team, and a desire to improve
- have a desire to grow interpersonally and interculturally
- have a conversational level of English and the discipline to adhere to a language pledge

In order to execute the aforementioned actions HOB has purchased a domain name and is in the process of developing a website.



**Partners**

The primary partner that HOB will need to work with is a high school located in the Washington DC area. Establishing this partnership is vital in getting the program off the ground. HOB has begun discussions with such a high school and will rely on this prospective partnership to provide HOB with the use of their facilities (i.e. gym, classrooms) to carry out the basketball training sessions and the programmed community engagement activities. This partnership may prove to be mutually beneficial as the school is currently looking to internationalize their student population by focusing on Chinese students. Through a partnership with HOB the participants will be able to not only visit a U.S. high school that interests them, but they will get a chance to experience the school's culture.

HOB will also rely on strategic partners in Shenzhen, China who have access to the target demographic. Given that HOB is still in its nascent stages, the on-the-ground work in the U.S. may require more time before running its first program. For this reason, HOB is considering running a pilot program in Shenzhen, China with the help of its established contacts in the country.

Third-party organizations have also been considered for potential partnerships. In order to provide variety in basketball skills training, HOB has reached out to Trax Sports©, a DC area sports academy that provides sports programs for schools and organizations in the U.S. and abroad. Additionally, although HOB intends to operate independently at the onset, considerations for a partnership with the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) will be evaluated in the future.

### **Program Timeline**

The ideal time periods to maximize enrollment in HOB will be during the times of winter holiday and summer breaks for Chinese high schools. Winter break in China depends on the dates of the Chinese New Year and lasts for about a month. For instance, were HOB to run during the Chinese winter break in 2018, the program would initiate mid-February. Despite the difference in winter break periods, this could potentially prove to be advantageous in that it would allow the program participants to “shadow” a student at the partner high school as school would be in session in the U.S. Additionally, it would allow attending an NBA game to be part of HOB programming as the NBA season would be in its fourth month. The idea of attending an NBA game is exciting for many Chinese youths due to the sport’s popularity and could potentially positively sway a participant’s initial interest in HOB.

Running HOB during the Chinese and U.S. summer vacation months may prove to be the best option. This time period is almost two full months for Chinese students and opens the door to running two or more programs in the U.S. While these months of vacation align with U.S. high school summer vacation months, attending an NBA basketball game would not be an option, nor would participating in a regular school day with the partner school. However, engaging with a school’s student population would still be a possibility. The particular school with which HOB is discussing running the program has a very active campus during the summer months as their summer youth programs are highly-attended and very successful. Furthermore, the three-day home stay with a family whose child or children attend the school will provide an opportunity for deeper intercultural engagement.

To compensate for not being able to attend an NBA game, options for attending other Washington DC related events and sites have been explored and can be easily implemented.

**Determining Costs**

The cost of the program is determined by several factors. They include:

- lodging (hotel and a potential host family fee)
- attending NBA game(s)\* (if during winter break)
- visiting DC museums/historical land marks/etc.
- transportation rentals
- pre-arranged meals/snacks/hydration for basketball trainings
- first-aid kits
- workshops with third party organizations
- partner fees for use of facilities

The expenses listed above will be calculated and divided by the number of participants to get a rough number upon which to base the cost per participant.

Outside of the program cost, other expenses to be covered by the participants include:

- round-trip airfare
- meals
- laundry
- souvenirs

**Other Considerations/Limitations**

The safety of HOB's participants is a top priority in ensuring that their experience with the program is optimized. With that in mind, given the physical nature of the program the facilitators will become familiar with best practices in injury prevention and management.

Other considerations include overcoming jet lag and homesickness. For this reason, pre-departure orientation for the participants will be thorough and cover these aspects and many others to assure the participants and their parents are confident in HOB facilitators.

Lastly, the recent political shift in the U.S. may pose an unfortunate effect on international visitors' desire and ability to come to the U.S. As of February of 2017, an executive order was signed by the president of the United States that, among many other things, shortens the expiration period of old visas for Chinese citizens (US Changes Visa Rule, 2017). It may subsequently make it harder for Chinese citizens without a visa to apply for one (US Changes Visa Rule, 2017). Commenting on these recent changes and the effect they will have on Chinese nationals, Li Haidong, a professor at the Institute of International Relations of China Foreign Affairs University stated that "The change in the rule might be related to Trump's attitude to immigration and it will have a negative effect on people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and the US" (US Changes Visa Rule, 2017). Nonetheless, HOB will continue moving and forward while monitoring any future visa policy changes that may effect its potential participants.

### *Limitations*

The limitations of The Heart of Basketball is that is it a brand new program. HOB does not carry the name recognition that other overseas youth programs may have nor does it have a well-established reputation. Nonetheless, the on-going talks with the DC area high school that HOB intends to partner with have been productive and promising. The new head of school has been open to discussing the possibility of incorporating HOB into the school's summer programs, making the likelihood of HOB getting off the ground a strong possibility.

The same limitation may be true from the point of view of the potential participants from China. For this reason, HOB is considering running a pilot program in China. While the idea of the HOB is to provide an opportunity for participants to experience the program in the U.S., by running a modified version of the program in China HOB may be able to prove its pedagogical value.

### **Conclusion**

Generally, overseas youth programs are seen as a great way for the youth to experience new cultures. Their experiences can be enhanced by programs that take a holistic approach to developing interpersonal skills and increasing knowledge in their participants. In doing so, these individuals are in a better position to serve as bridges that promote cross-cultural understanding and stronger relationships between international communities.

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