

# *The Path to Construct Fitness Community and the Effect to Promote Self-regulated Exercise*

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**Abstract**—The fitness community is a self-regulated exercise sports organization with the voluntariness as the premise, the desire of fitness as the bond and the cooperation as the core. During the one-year studio practice of "everyone-goes-together-to-take-self-regulated-exercises", sixty sport English majors from Wuhan sports university were given strategies such as cultural creation, power giving, consultation and joint construction to build a fitness community with wishes, participation, communication, cooperation and belonging. The study finds that the fitness community can effectively promote students' self-regulated exercise by enriching the methods and improving the effect of self-regulated exercise.

**Keywords**—studio; fitness community; self-regulated exercise; path; effect

Recently the learning community has been widely used in college students' self-regulated learning. This learning organization takes voluntariness as the precondition, the common desire as the link, the participation, the communication and the cooperation as the core. The organization helps to promote college students' self-regulated study. In this context, fitness community is created to promote college students' self-regulated exercise based on the principle of learning community. Promoting college students' self-regulated exercise is the key to improve the teaching quality of college physical education and develop it into a connotative way. Through action research method, the study tries to build the studio of "everyone-goes-together-to-take-self-regulated-exercises" into a fitness community. The effect of community model was investigated by means of practical intervention.

## I. THE CONNOTATION OF FITNESS COMMUNITY AND SELF-REGULATED EXERCISE

In 1887 Ferdinand Tönnies proposed the concept of community, believing that any organization based on cooperative relations is a community. In 1995 Ernest Boyer put forward the learning community, pointing out that learning community is an organization formed by people working together to realize the common aspiration.<sup>2</sup> Its members share learning interests, seek to achieve their aspirations, and understand how the world works. They participate in learning and interact with each other. Chinese scholar, Zhang Jianwei, also defines the learning community. Learning community is a group composed of learners and facilitators (teachers, experts, facilitators, etc.) who often communicate with each other, share learning resources, complete certain learning tasks, and

affect each other to make promotions.<sup>3</sup> Based on the above views, fitness community is defined in this paper as a group composed of exercisers and promoters, sharing the same fitness goals, exercising in a common environment, and accomplishing certain fitness tasks together. Its elements can be summarized as wishes, participation, communication, cooperation and belonging.

Self-regulated Learning is a process in which learners guide their thoughts, emotions and behaviors, so that they can realize their goals. Similarly, self-regulated exercise is the process in which exercisers set their fitness goals, select appropriate fitness content, manage time scientifically, actively seek exercise resources, and take the initiative to monitor exercise effectively. Exercisers can choose and regulate their own fitness motivation, methods, time, environment and results, so their exercise is fully autonomous. If none of these aspects can be controlled by oneself, then the exercise is not autonomous. In reality, there are neither completely autonomous nor totally not autonomous exercises, most of them fall somewhere in between.

## II. PROMOTE STUDENTS' SELF-REGULATED EXERCISE WITH THE MODEL OF FITNESS COMMUNITY

### A. Subjects and Methods

The subject is the studio of "everyone-goes-together-to-take-self-regulated-exercises" in Wuhan sports university whose staff includes students and promoters. The students are sixty sport English majors while promoters include teachers. Teachers give guidance to students on self-regulated exercise strategies and intervene through four strategies: cultural creation, power giving, communication and joint construction. The studio started in February 2016, and experienced the process of introduction, first intervention, second intervention and effect tracking for one year. This study mainly adopts action research method, based on which observation method and interview method are combined to collect data.

### B. The Path to Build Fitness Community

Pedagogical "Pickle Theory" thinks college culture has an indelible influence on students' development. There is no doubt that the two universities produce very different talents, because the water in the pickle jar is different. The cultural atmosphere of one university is different from that of another,

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and the nutrients college students absorb from "water" are quite different.<sup>4</sup>

To create the culture of fitness community, the studio creates its environment by clarifying problems and objectives, and negotiating rules. The studio organized students to discuss the problems in fitness, and everyone spoke freely. On this basis, the problems to be solved in the studio, the goals of the studio and the specific exercising goals are established. The rules of the studio are generated by students in interactive negotiation and formed in three steps: "defrosting", that is, to eliminate the concept which fitness community does not match; "frosting", to put the rules on the table for students to discuss and revise together; "re-frosting", to firmly implement the rules once they are in place. The studio strives to create a sincere, safe, equal, free and happy training atmosphere through teacher's efforts. Teachers accept students in a sincere attitude, love students with an appreciative eye, care students through every subtle details, and put students' interests above anything. To make students feel safe, all members must respect each other's privacy. Members' secrets shall never be disclosed outside the community. When the student feels that the studio is safe and reliable, he can discuss any problem without reservation and ask for any help without hesitation. Inside the studio, every member enjoys equal rights to speak. Each member exists in a way comfortable for him. In class students are nervous; within the community their tense nerves can be relaxed. Also the studio attaches great importance to happy fitness, including music and game elements, fully mobilizing the students into exercise.<sup>5</sup>

The studio provides students with rights. Students have options to voluntarily participate or withdraw from the community. Students are the persons mainly responsible for exercise. The teacher's main role is not to teach but to "promote" physical fitness. In preparation before exercise, teachers stick to the "less-teaching-but-better" principle. The teaching time is limited to 30 percent. In the presentation, teachers keep communicating with students each other. In the fitness process, teachers pay attention to group and individual counseling. Students are entitled to control over their own exercise. All schedules are informed in advance for students to arrange ahead of schedule. Such information as when and where to take the fitness, what to prepare, what final effect to achieve, is given to students in earlier time. Most importantly, the studio gives students the right to promote each other. The studio respects the individual's difference and firmly believes that every student has certain expertise and can provide help to other students within their capacity. Every student is an "expert" in a field. Each student's expertise, skills and experience are important learning resources shared within the community. I am for everyone, everybody is for me. Every student not only benefits but also contributes to the progress of others.

The studio emphasizes communications. Teachers welcome students to have conversations about any fitness issues. Questions from students are responded within 24 hours. Each week students and teachers meet at a fixed time in a fixed place. There's no podium for every conversation. Each fitness is designed flexibly according to the specific project pattern to create a warm environment for students to eliminate

the fear of bold communication. Fitness is not only the interaction between people and fitness equipment, but also needs the conversation between people. It is also the deepening process of self-learning when students exchange experience of exercises and pass on the experience to others. Teachers actively ask students the following questions: "how many times have I worked out this week?", "which exercise do I think is the most rewarding?", "what are my weaknesses in working out this week?" etc. Affirmations to students' answers help them to build confidence to participate in physical fitness and communication. According to the students' answer, the studio groups them based on the principle of proximity. Each group is different in number, which can effectively promote after-school exchanges. With common problems, members have the same direction of effort, which increases the possibility of communication. Because of the "proximity" of space and emotion, the group members "smell the same" and guarantee the willingness to communicate. To the intimacy and frequency of communication small group size is conducive. Some groups are compact; some loose. Some group meets face-to-face with high frequency; some only meet once or twice a week, during which they communicate via the Internet.<sup>6</sup>

The studio encourages everyone's participation. Every student does not only use studio resources, but also create. Each member is the master of the studio, creating and building the studio together, which determines the direction of the studio. "Scaffolding construction" provides students with the opportunity to participate. The first phase of the studio is to implement scaffolding construction on the organization. First of all, teachers give students an overview of studio. Then, as the first organizer, the teacher organized the first few fitness exercises, emphasizing the creation of atmosphere, the establishment of community model and the culture formation. Starting from the fourth exercise, students participate in the studio's fitness organization in groups. Before the activity, the students usually conduct independent exploration on a project and discuss with the team members to decide on the content and form of the activity. The group then organized the project together. In this way, students no longer play the role of a traditional student, but take more responsibilities and gain more opportunity for growth. The group-growth system ensures that each member participates in the construction of the studio. In the second phase of the studio, students form a growth group to take charge of the operation of the studio, which ensures the joint construction right of each member. All the members jointly elect a chairman, a vice chairman and a growth-reminder officer. These three members serve the studio. The chairman assumes overall responsibility, the vice chairman assists the chairman and the growth-reminder officer has a veto over the bill. In addition, there are two executive secretaries per week, one in charge of the secretary and one assistant secretary. Students in the studio take turns to be responsible for the operation of each intensive exercise activity. The secretary is mainly responsible for organizing activities and training assistant secretary, who will be the secretary next week. The two secretaries and three service members collect the information as to the member's exercise situation and design the fitness plan in advance before each activity. This way ensures that each member is involved in the

construction of the studio so that everyone is both the master and the builder.

### *C. The Effect to Promote Students' Self-regulated Exercise through Fitness Community*

The studio has neither any administrative pressure nor any credit award for students. In the practice of "everyone-goes-together-to-take-self-regulated-exercises", two members quit during the first phase but all the other members participated in at least one phase of exercise completely, which partially shows the attraction of the studio. The students show a high degree of involvement and participation. As for the exercise tasks assigned by the studio, students can finish them in good quality and quantity, and devote themselves to the exercise with a responsible attitude.

How to accurately observe students' improved ability of self-regulated exercise is a challenge facing this study. Self-regulated exercise is a complex concept, which can take different forms and show different forms. Students may give up the development of true self-regulated exercise ability and learn to display this self-regulated exercise behavior mask in order to please teachers. Therefore, this study not only examines the students' belief but also their actual self-regulated exercise behavior. The belief observation is carried out through questionnaire survey while exercise behavior is mainly realized through interviews. The questionnaire contains 8 items and the five-point Likert scale was used to distinguish between complete disagreement (1), basic disagreement (2), non-disagreement (3), basic agreement (4) and complete agreement (5). The following table shows the average responses in the questionnaire. The results show that, on the whole, students' evaluation is satisfactory.

TABLE I. STUDENTS' VIEWS ON SELF-REGULATED EXERCISE AND EVALUATIONS

Students' views on self-regulated exercise	Evaluation (n =42)
(1) I like to exercise after class with my classmates.	4.05
(2) I like being a member of the studio. We work together for the common goal.	3.28
(3) when my success is helpful to other students in the studio, I will make special efforts.	3.34
(4) I find it interesting and meaningful to explore the process of exercise.	4.43
(5) I think self-regulated exercise improves my exercise ability.	3.75
(6) I think self-regulated exercise has made my relationship with my classmates more harmonious.	4.89
(7) I feel that self-regulated exercise improves my enthusiasm for exercise.	3.56
(8) I feel that extra-curricular self-regulated exercise has expanded my thinking ability.	3.89

After two periods of intervention, students also show more independent behaviors in outdoor exercise. They gradually transfer the autonomy of studio fitness to other exercises. One year after the intervention, the author interviewed the students, and 90% of them said that the fitness community had a great effect on promoting their self-exercise. They expressed their recognition of the fitness community model. Having met a group of like-minded people in the studio, they were faced with similar fitness problems and were working towards the

same direction, which enhanced their motivation. "When I'm doing a pull-up I find it hard to pull up, and I get confused. I heard similar doubts from another companion. But a companion told us not to strive for a large number of pull-ups, especially at the beginning. It was only when I adjusted my bad habits that I realized those habits were the main cause of my difficulty in pulling up. After several attempts, I found that I could do better than before if I didn't ask too much for the amount of pull-ups. I told my former companion, who was equally confused with me. He wanted to give it a try." "I've found that sharing my doubts with my peers builds confidence. When I was confused about physical exercise, I felt inferior and wanted to give up. The community has given me more courage and confidence to continue working out."

In the studio students have the opportunity to be a master and have greater control over their own affairs. The students interviewed were positive about the project they chose. They felt that if it was their choice, it would be easier to think deeply and exercise. "I think it's a great studio model. Not only does it give us the freedom to choose exercise programs, but it also gives us the pleasure of sharing ideas." "It's really good because I can learn and deeply understand the program I'm interested in." " ) "because I have chosen to learn what I am interested in, I enjoy the exercise and share it with other members of the studio group."

The studio is a place where they can inspire their desire to communicate. Everyone is a luminous body and has a rich inner nature. Everyone communicates with each other and learns from each other. "Through the studio, my expression skills have improved a lot." "I think my self-expression has improved because I can express my thoughts in detail and clearly." "I did get some improvement, but it wasn't obvious. I can realize that it's much better than before. And I believe that as long as I continue to work hard, I will further improve my ability of expression."

Every member in the studio can be respected by others and his opinions can be answered. Participants get along with each other sincerely and feel a lot of positive energy, so that they have the sense of belong. They have the courage to break through and change in front of difficulty. "At the beginning, I felt some pressure. As I had a heavy study task in my major class, I always felt that I could not find time to complete the independent exercise task. But when I saw that other students in the studio could finish tasks better, I felt very guilty for not fulfilling my responsibilities. So in the following week I will try my best to schedule time to exercise and complete the task. Gradually, I began to enjoy the pleasure of independent exercise more and more. Now I want to exercise, not for teachers or exams." "I was interested in exercise before, but always just took sports as a course in school to learn, and it's different now, I can freely express ideas in the fitness community, to communicate with your partner. Exercise is actually used as a communication tool to find solutions to my confusions in life or study." "I used to do very little outside exercise except for physical education, and the occasional outside exercise was only to complete the tasks assigned by the teacher. And I can always find reasonable excuses, such as not being able to solve the problems in exercise, not knowing what sports to do and so on. However, it's not the same now.

Exercise has become a habit, and you really appreciate the importance of exercise as a confidence boost to overcome difficulties.” “I have heard the senior townsman say that there is no physical education class in the third year, so I hardly exercise. My classmates and I formed a fitness group to exercise together, which gave me the motivation to overcome difficulties and continue to exercise. Although this semester is very busy with specialized courses, I cannot find time to take exercise. I still exercise unconsciously and have formed the habit of exercising. Although the exercise process is very painful, I want to exercise now.”

All in all, the questionnaire survey and interview results clearly show that self-regulated exercise brings many benefits to students. Students begin to take responsibility for their own exercise tasks. Through interaction with classmates, they improved the ability of expression, changed the attitude of exercise, and improved the motivation of exercise, thus becoming more self-regulated.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

Through cultural creation, right giving, communication and joint construction, the studio “everyone-goes-together-to-take-self-regulated-exercises” has been constructed. The basic elements of desire, participation, communication, cooperation

and belonging of the fitness community are integrated into every member and his every activity. Practice has proved that the fitness community has positive effects on promoting college students' self-regulated exercise. The fitness community has truly become the place where students grow up independently.

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