

A Qualitative Analysis of Barriers for Using Fitness Self-testing in College Students

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Researchers have suggested that fitness self-testing may be an alternative means for youth fitness testing to solve some of the existing problems with field-based fitness testing. Therefore, this study aimed to qualitatively examine college students' perceptions on fitness self-testing. A total of 102 freshmen and sophomores with 48% being male students participated in the study. They enrolled in a fitness for life course and self-tested their own health related fitness at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. Using the phenomenological approach, students were asked to answer an open-ended question describing their self-testing fitness experiences after the completion of the semester. Constant content analysis strategies were used to create themes. Observation notes, informal conversation notes, written reflections on self-testing were used to triangulate the data. Peer debriefing was conducted to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. The results showed that the following themes emerged: (a) control of my own fitness via self-testing fitness at my own time whenever I am ready; (b) learn about my own fitness with empirical data; (c) no peer pressure and no need to impress others; (d) keep me honest and try my best for my own fitness; and (e) completed test result privacy. Therefore, fitness self-testing has the potential to solve existing field-based testing problems and help college students understand and monitor their own fitness.