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## Discourse Communities I am Involved In

By Shannon Bertsch

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A discourse community is as defined a group of people who use the same language. I have been a part of several discourse communities in my life. One of the biggest discourse communities I have been a part of is swimming, which I have been doing since I was in second grade. Another discourse community I have recently been involved with is CHAARG here at Bowling Green. Both of these groups involve using their own language including specific terminology for that specific activity. Another way these two discourse communities are similar are their goals and what they have taught me. Even though these two groups are exercise based, they also have improved my sense of creativity when writing.

In my eleven years of swimming I have learned a lot of terminology that is unique to the sport. For instance, the four strokes of swimming- fly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle, are very important and were used all the time, at practices and at meets. Another term we used unique to swimming was “on the top” or “on the bottom” referring to when we start each set. The top meaning, we start the set on top of the minute, and bottom meaning we start thirty seconds into the minute. One other term, we used a lot in swim practice was “sets.” A set is a group of work-outs all put together that we repeat a certain number of times.

Swim team’s goal is very much about promoting well-being and a healthy life style. When I was swimming at a high school level, we had practice every morning at five o’clock, and had meets almost every Saturday. This meant we were getting to exercise at least five days a week. As a team, we also were taught about eating right and having healthy relationships within the team atmosphere by guest speakers. In swimming, I learned all the health tips that I needed to become a successful person, not just in the pool but also in school and my personal life as well.

I have been on five teams in my life including club teams and school teams. These teams include a summer team called D.A.R.T.S., which stands for Delaware Aquatic Racing Team Stingrays. I have also been a part of two club teams called D.O.R.C, which stands for Delaware Ohio Racing Club, and Riptide which is a YMCA team. I was also a part of two school teams, one for middle school and another one for high school. I always had swimming to fall back on. This is why it was hard to for me make the decision to not swim my freshman year of college. With swimming, I knew I would be motivated to exercise every day and make healthy decisions, but without swimming I would no longer have that motivation to be healthy in school. I knew I had to get involved in some other group activity here at Bowling Green to help keep a healthy lifestyle. That is when I found CHAARG here on campus.

CHAARG is a club here at Bowling Green State University as well as many other campuses all over the country. CHAARG stands for Changing Health, Attitudes, and Actions to Recreate Girls. The goals for CHAARG are to create a passion for being active as well as overall health in college-aged girls. So far, CHAARG is just what I have been needing, not just in a health sense, but also it is been a great way to meet new people and create friendships which is also important in having a healthy lifestyle. Initially, I just wanted to join CHAARG to stay fit because I am no longer on a swimming team, but it has also been a place where I can bond with people who enjoy the same things I do, health and fitness.

In my time with CHAARG I have learned some words used frequently in our work out sessions. This includes “lifting” as well as some yoga poses and stretches. Lifting refers to lifting weights in the gym, which we do frequently in CHAARG. Yoga is also a popular exercise we do in CHAARG to relax from the stress of the day.

I have learned a lot from CHAARG so far, but the biggest thing that I have learned is that working out can be fun if you just change up the exercises. This is something I didn’t know because before all I did was swimming. Another thing I have learned from CHAARG is that working out is a good distraction from school. You can think about something other than the tests you have to study for or the assignment you have to turn in.

Both swimming and CHAARG have helped in my academic advancement, especially in writing. When I was little I would read swimming magazines and read about all the things I could improve on in my stroke techniques. Reading magazines would help me learn new words which I could apply to my writing at school. In swimming, we also would write out our workout plans for the day, including what sets we would be doing. Sometimes we were able to write our own workouts and really get creative with how each set was supposed to be done.

One specific writing activity we have done in CHAARG is writing ourselves a message to be read again during exam week. The idea of the activity is to inspire ourselves and have us remember to push through exam week. This was a really interesting activity for me to do because I generally don’t like writing, but I was writing to myself, which took all the stress and worry out. In that activity, I could just creatively write knowing no one would critique it, and I could write whatever came to mind.

Swimming and CHAARG are both discourse communities. They have their own language and terminologies. They both have similar goals which include the promotion of healthy behavior in young adults. Through being a member of these groups I have learned the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Also, even though swimming and CHAARG don’t seem like they would help someone academically, they have helped me be a more creative writer.

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