



Active Insight: Evidence in Action Tip #272



Adapting for Mixed Abilities

Overview

Mixed ability classes in Years 3–6 require flexible teaching so students can apply and refine skills at appropriate levels. Differentiated approaches support progression, engagement, and wellbeing. Providing varied challenges ensures all students experience success and continue developing movement skills within inclusive and structured physical activity environments. Purposeful adjustments to tasks, equipment, and support also help students build confidence, remain motivated, and participate meaningfully according to their individual strengths and learning needs.

Key Teaching Ideas

Plan activities with multiple levels of challenge and encourage self-paced progression. Provide extension opportunities. Adapt tasks to suit student needs. Support inclusive participation, helping all students build confidence and engage meaningfully while developing movement skills. Use flexible groupings, varied equipment, and supportive feedback to ensure students experience success, appropriate challenge, and ongoing growth within movement learning environments.

Practical Application

- Use tiered skill stations offering varied challenge levels within activities
- Provide choice-based tasks allowing students to select appropriate challenge levels
- Modify rules to adjust difficulty and support skill progression effectively
- Design progressive challenges encouraging continuous skill development and engagement
- Group students flexibly to support inclusive participation and learning outcomes

Next Steps

Use FMS progressions to guide differentiation. Flexible teaching supports engagement, progression, and confidence for all learners in mixed ability classes.

The Fundamental Movement Skills approach is informed by foundational motor development research (Gallahue & Ozmun, 2006), contemporary physical education pedagogy (Graham et al., 2013), and the Australian Sports Commission's emphasis on developing movement competence and confidence through fundamental movement skills as a foundation for lifelong physical activity and sport participation.

