



Active Insight: Evidence in Action



Tip #1118: Designing Participation Recognition Systems

Overview

Well-designed participation recognition systems acknowledge effort, inclusion and learning progression rather than only outcomes, and can boost motivation when aligned with curriculum intent. These systems work best when recognition is specific, equitable and tied to observable behaviours that demonstrate learning through movement and development of fundamental movement skills, not just attendance or winning. Consistent expectations and simple tracking enable teachers to recognise small gains and broaden ownership of physical activity across diverse student groups. Embedding recognition into everyday lessons supports positive classroom culture and ongoing assessment for learning.

Key Teaching Ideas

Teachers can design recognition to support formative assessment and inclusive teaching and learning, acknowledge effort, improvement and contribution to group learning as well as skill demonstration. Use student-centred criteria and peer and self-assessment to build learning through movement and strengthen personal and social capability, helping students articulate progress and supporting physical literacy objectives. Keep systems low-cost, transparent and curriculum-aligned so recognition reinforces the same outcomes you teach. Review data regularly to ensure equitable access to recognition opportunities across the whole class.

Practical Application

- **Participation Rubric:** Create a simple three-point rubric. For example, engaged, tried new skill, supported others, and use it during a ten-minute skill circuit. Give each student a sticker for each criterion met and record one small goal for their next lesson so recognition links directly to learning goals.
- **Movement Points System:** Introduce points awarded for demonstrating parts of a fundamental movement skill and for peer coaching. Allow students to trade points for a choice of station or a leadership role at the end of class, trial with one class first to model the process.
- **Progress Board:** At the end of a lesson, invite two students to share a specific improvement they made and display a rotating progress board noting these small wins. Pair the public



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acknowledgement with a private teacher note to the student to reinforce effort-focused recognition.

- **Self and Partner Checklist:** Give students a one-page checklist linked to learning through movement, which can include effort, risk-taking, teamwork, skill focus, and spend five minutes at lesson end for self and partner feedback. Use the next lesson to model how to give objective, movement-focused feedback.
- **Equity Tracking Sheet:** Keep a simple class spreadsheet tracking who receives recognition by gender, group and confidence level, and review fortnightly to identify under-recognised students. Purposefully provide roles or criteria that highlight quieter students' contributions so recognition becomes more equitable.

Next Steps

Visit [Anywhere PD](#) for resources on designing equitable recognition systems. The [Active Education Australia website](#) also has tools on inclusive assessment and participation tracking.

References and Research

1. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). *Self-Determination Theory* - How recognising effort, autonomy, competence and belonging strengthens intrinsic motivation, engagement and lifelong participation in physical activity.
2. Hattie, J. (2023). *Visible Learning: The Sequel* - How formative feedback, clear success criteria and recognition of learning progress help improve motivation, self-regulation and student achievement.
3. Australian Sports Commission. *Australian Physical Literacy Framework (2019)* - How developing physical, psychological, social and cognitive capabilities supports lifelong participation in physical activity through confidence, competence and motivation.