Tip #1163: Designing Leadership Mentoring Systems

Overview

Pairing experienced student leaders with emerging ones creates a structured environment for knowledge transfer and skill development that benefits both parties. Mentors consolidate their own understanding by teaching it, while mentees gain guided support in a relationship built on shared experience. A well-designed mentoring system strengthens the leadership culture of the whole school by making development a continuous, peer-driven process that does not depend on teacher availability to keep moving forward.

Key Teaching Ideas

Intentional pairing and structured support are what make a mentoring system work. Teachers can provide mentors with training in active listening, constructive feedback, and how to guide a peer through a leadership task without taking it over. Regular check-ins and shared reflection tasks keep the relationship purposeful and give teachers visibility over how both students are progressing across the term. A simple shared log that both mentor and mentee contribute to keeps the focus on growth rather than just activity.

Practical Application

- **Mentor Training Sessions:** Run a dedicated session for senior mentors before they are paired with mentees, covering active listening, giving feedback, and how to support without directing.
- **Shared Goal Setting:** Ask mentor-mentee pairs to agree on a specific leadership goal for the term, giving their collaboration a clear focus and a way to measure progress together.
- **Shadowing Before Leading:** Give mentees the chance to observe their mentor in action before taking on a leadership role themselves, so they can see what good facilitation looks like in context before being asked to replicate it.
- **Structured Reflection Check-Ins:** Schedule a regular ten-minute check-in where pairs work through a guided reflection prompt together, keeping the mentoring relationship active and purposeful.
- **Joint Project Delivery:** Task mentor-mentee pairs with co-delivering a physical activity project, with the mentor guiding the planning and the mentee taking the lead on delivery.

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Next Steps

The Active Education Australia website has resources to support peer mentoring and leadership development in school settings. Anywhere PD offers practical, self-paced resources for teachers setting up mentoring programs.

References and Research

1. Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (v9) – Recognises the role of positive peer relationships in developing personal and social capability.

2. Australian Sports Commission: Physical Literacy – Highlights how supportive relationships contribute to the psychological and social dimensions of physical development in school settings.

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