Tip #1185: Developing Student Leadership Communication Opportunities

Overview

Communication is at the core of every leadership role, and physical education provides a rich and immediate context for students to develop it. When students brief a team, explain a rule, give feedback on technique, or resolve a dispute during a game, they are practising communication in a setting where the impact is visible and immediate. These experiences build the confidence and clarity that students carry into other areas of school and community life, and the variety of communication demands in each lesson ensures that students develop a broad range of skills across a single program.

Key Teaching Ideas

Communication leadership develops most when students are given tasks that require them to adapt their message to the audience and context. Asking a student to explain a game or activity to a younger class requires different language and pacing than briefing a peer team before a match, and both are different from providing technical feedback during a skill session. Teachers can design a progression of communication tasks across a unit, starting with simple one-on-one feedback and building toward whole-group facilitation. Debriefing after each communication task, with a focus on what was clear and what could be more precise, builds the habit of reflective communication.

Practical Application

- **Team Briefing Leaders:** Ask a student to deliver a pre-game briefing to their team, covering the key strategy for the match and one specific thing the team will focus on during play.
- **Referee and Caller Roles:** Train students to officiate small-sided games, giving them responsibility for calling decisions clearly and managing disputes calmly and fairly.
- **Skill Feedback Providers:** Pair students to observe each other during a skill drill and deliver one specific piece of constructive feedback using a teacher-provided sentence starter.
- **Class Meeting Chairs:** Rotate students through the role of chairing a brief class meeting at the end of a lesson, guiding a discussion on what went well and what the group wants to work on next.

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- **Community Briefing Presenters:** Ask student leaders to brief their peers on an upcoming school physical activity event, covering the schedule, expectations, and how students can contribute.

Next Steps

The Active Education Australia website provides broader support for teachers building student voice into their programs.

References and Research

Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (v9) – Supports the development of communication and personal and social capability through authentic leadership contexts in HPE.

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