



Active Insight: Evidence in Action



Tip #1187: Structuring Leadership Peer Mentoring Opportunities

Overview

Peer mentoring in physical education creates a structured context for students to develop leadership by guiding and supporting others. When more experienced students mentor peers in movement skills or game understanding, both parties benefit: the mentor consolidates their own knowledge by teaching it, and the mentee receives support in a relationship built on shared experience rather than authority. Peer mentoring also builds the social fabric of the school by creating connections across year levels and ability groups that would not otherwise form naturally.

Key Teaching Ideas

Peer mentoring programs are most productive when mentors receive preparation before they begin working with their mentees. Teachers can run a short training session covering how to give feedback constructively, how to adapt an explanation when a peer does not understand, and how to encourage without taking over. Pairing mentors and mentees around a shared goal, such as improving a specific movement skill or preparing for a carnival event, gives the relationship a clear focus and makes progress visible. Regular check-ins with both the mentor and mentee help teachers monitor the quality of the relationship and adjust pairings if needed.

Practical Application

- **Cross-Age Buddies:** Pair senior students with junior classes during weekly movement sessions, where the older student demonstrates and guides the younger student through a specific fundamental movement skill.
- **Skill-Specific Mentoring Pairs:** During an athletics unit, match students who are proficient in a particular event with peers who want to improve, giving each pair a structured session plan and a simple feedback checklist.
- **Active Playground Mentors:** Train senior students to organise and lead inclusive games during lunch breaks, with a focus on drawing in students who are standing on the edges and adapting games for different ability levels.



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- **Mentor Training Sessions:** Run a dedicated session for mentors before they begin, covering active listening, how to give feedback, and how to support a peer through a challenge without doing the task for them.
- **Shared Goal Records:** Ask mentor-mentee pairs to agree on a specific skill or leadership goal for the term and keep a shared record of their progress, which both students contribute to after each session.

Next Steps

Visit the [Active Education Australia website](https://activeeducationaustralia.edu.au) for further support on cross-age learning and student leadership.

References and Research

Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (v9) – Supports the development of personal and social capability through structured peer interaction and cross-age leadership contexts.