



Active Insight: Evidence in Action



Tip #1190: Coordinating Leadership Transition Opportunities

Overview

Leadership transitions in HPE programs are a critical moment that can either strengthen or disrupt the continuity of what has been built. When outgoing leaders hand over to incoming ones without a structured process, institutional knowledge is lost and new leaders spend time rediscovering what their predecessors already knew. A deliberate transition process, where responsibilities, relationships, and ongoing projects are transferred systematically, protects the program and gives new leaders a strong foundation from which to develop their own approach.

Key Teaching Ideas

Leadership transition works best when it is treated as a program in its own right rather than a single handover meeting. Teachers can structure a transition period of three to four weeks where outgoing and incoming leaders work alongside each other, with the outgoing leader gradually stepping back as the new leader takes on more responsibility. A standardised handover document that captures current projects, key contacts, and known challenges gives new leaders a practical reference point and reduces the risk of important information being lost. Asking both the outgoing and incoming leader to reflect on the transition at the end of the process builds the habit of structured handover into the program culture.

Practical Application

- **Structured Handover Period:** Organise a three-week overlap where outgoing and incoming leaders work together, with the outgoing leader explaining current projects and the incoming leader gradually taking on each responsibility.
- **Handover Document Template:** Create a standardised digital handover document for all leadership roles, covering current projects, key contacts, budget details, and known challenges, stored in a shared location for future reference.
- **Joint Planning Sessions:** Organise a planning meeting between transitioning leaders and their teams to review the term's program together and identify priorities for the incoming leader to carry forward.



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- **Transition Reflection Conversations:** Ask both the outgoing and incoming leader to share one thing they learned from the transition process and one piece of advice for the next person who takes on the role.
- **Student Captain Mentoring:** Have outgoing student captains spend two weeks mentoring their successors on the practical responsibilities of the role, including how to organise events and communicate with staff.

Next Steps

Teachers managing leadership transitions in HPE can find practical support through [Anywhere PD](#). The [Active Education Australia website](#) has resources on building sustainable HPE programs and team continuity.

References and Research

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