



Active Insight: Evidence in Action



Tip #1194: Designing Leadership Participation Opportunities

Overview

A whole-school approach to physical activity depends on students taking an active role in designing and driving participation programs, not just attending them. When teachers create structured opportunities for students to lead fitness challenges, coordinate inter-house competitions, or plan community engagement events, they develop the organisational and advocacy skills that sustain an active school culture over time. Students who lead participation programs also develop a deeper understanding of what makes physical activity accessible and appealing to a diverse group of peers.

Key Teaching Ideas

Participation leadership programs are most productive when students are given a genuine brief with real outcomes rather than a simulated task. Asking a student group to plan and run an actual school fitness challenge, with a real timeline and a real audience, creates the conditions for authentic learning. Teachers can support the process by providing a planning framework, connecting students with the resources and permissions they need, and debriefing the group after the event. Gathering feedback from participants and using it to improve the next program builds the habit of evidence-based planning into the student leadership culture.

Practical Application

- **Movement Mentors Program:** Implement a peer-led initiative where trained senior students guide younger students through active play sessions during lunch breaks, with a focus on skill development and positive social interaction.
- **Sports Council with Diverse Roles:** Form a student council responsible for organising inter-house competitions, promoting school-wide fitness challenges, and gathering feedback on preferred physical activities from across the school.
- **Student-Designed Elective Units:** Involve senior students in co-designing an elective physical activity unit, allowing them to research and propose a new sport or fitness program that reflects the interests of their peers.



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- **Active Break Facilitators:** Train student leaders to run short, energising movement breaks in classrooms or during assemblies, using simple, inclusive activities that invite all students and staff to participate.
- **Community Fun Run Organisers:** Ask a student group to plan and coordinate a school-community fun run or walk-a-thon, handling the logistics, promotion, and volunteer coordination from start to finish.

Next Steps

Resources on whole-school physical activity leadership are available through [Anywhere PD](#) and the [Active Education Australia website](#) for teachers building student-led participation programs.

References and Research

Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (v9) – Supports a whole-school approach to physical activity through student-led participation programs and personal and social capability development.