



# Active Insight: Evidence in Action



## Tip #1209: Creating Leadership Opportunities Through Outdoor Recreation

### Overview

Outdoor recreation provides a dynamic environment for developing leadership skills that cannot be fully replicated in a traditional gymnasium. When students take on leadership roles in natural settings, they must navigate unpredictable variables and make decisions under varying conditions, building advanced problem-solving and risk-management capability. Outdoor settings also tend to level the playing field, encouraging inclusive participation by shifting the focus from competitive sport to collaborative navigation and environmental stewardship.

### Key Teaching Ideas

Teachers can teach the principles of environmental impact and safe navigation before delegating leadership responsibilities in the outdoors. Structuring activities so that leadership is shared and rotational ensures all students practise decision-making under varying levels of physical and mental demand. Building reflective practices focused on group dynamics and environmental connection helps students understand the broader value of nature-based movement. When students lead a bushwalk segment, conduct a risk assessment, or teach a camp craft skill, they are developing the kind of adaptive, responsive leadership that grows through genuine challenge.

### Practical Application

- **Peer-Led Orienteering:** Assign small groups to design and map out an orienteering course within the school grounds or a local park, then lead their peers through the navigation challenge.
- **Camp Craft Demonstrations:** Task student leaders with mastering and then explicitly teaching specific camp craft skills to younger cohorts before an outdoor education excursion.
- **Leave No Trace Advocacy:** Have a leadership team audit the school's outdoor activities for environmental impact and develop a peer-education campaign on sustainable recreation.
- **Risk Assessment Walkthroughs:** Guide students through conducting a formal risk assessment of a local natural environment before a planned activity, identifying hazards and proposing mitigations.



# Active Insight: Evidence in Action



- **Rotating Expedition Leadership:** Implement rotating leadership roles during a group bushwalk, where the designated leader is responsible for pacing, morale, and regular rest breaks.

## Next Steps

[Anywhere PD](#) has resources on outdoor education leadership, including navigation and environmental stewardship. The [Active Education Australia website](#) also covers nature-based movement programs.

## References and Research

1. Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (Version 9.0) – Establishes the curriculum expectations for developing movement competence, health literacy, personal and social capability, and lifelong participation in physical activity.
2. Australian Sports Commission. (2019). Australian Physical Literacy Framework – Defines physical literacy as the development of physical, psychological, social and cognitive capabilities that support lifelong participation in physical activity.
3. Australian Sports Commission. Playing for Life – Promotes game-based, inclusive and student-centred approaches that maximise participation, enjoyment and skill development.