Tip #1214: Designing Recognition Participation Opportunities

Overview

Designing formal structures to recognise participation helps schools celebrate the many ways students contribute, engage and connect through movement, play and active routines. When schools acknowledge different forms of involvement, such as active commuting, lunchtime clubs, peer support and personal growth, they broaden what participation can look like. This approach helps every student feel seen and valued while positioning recognition as part of a positive, inclusive school culture.

Key Teaching Ideas

Recognition programs are strongest when they are accessible and achievable for all students, not only those involved in formal sport or high-profile activities. Criteria can be viewed through different lenses, including consistency, personal improvement, inclusion, leadership, teamwork, effort and contribution to the wider school community. Adding a short reflection helps students understand how everyday choices, active routines and support for others can build confidence, belonging and long-term participation.

Practical Application

- **Active Commuter Awards:** Implement a monthly recognition program for students who consistently walk, ride, or scoot to school, celebrating their contribution to personal health and the environment.
- **Participation Milestones:** Create a tiered certificate system that recognises students for regular involvement in activities beyond scheduled lessons, such as lunchtime clubs, active breaks or school-based challenges.
- **Personal Growth Acknowledgements:** Dedicate awards to students who show growth in confidence, effort, teamwork, persistence or skill development, regardless of their starting point.
- **Community Connection Certificates:** Recognise students who participate in community-based activities such as local fun runs, charity walks, active travel initiatives or family movement challenges.

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- **Inclusion Champion Awards:** Acknowledge students who adjust games, encourage peers or create welcoming spaces so more students can take part with confidence.

Next Steps

Teachers designing recognition programs can find practical tools on Anywhere PD, including tiered certificate systems, milestone trackers and reflection prompts that support consistent, inclusive participation.

References and Research

1. 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.

2. Australian Sports Commission. Playing for Life – Promotes game-based, inclusive and student-centred approaches that maximise participation, enjoyment and skill development.

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