



Active Insight: Evidence in Action



Tip #1215: Developing Student-Created Recognition Opportunities

Overview

Giving students the authority to design and lead their own recognition opportunities builds ownership, belonging and shared responsibility across the school community. When students decide which behaviours, contributions and strengths deserve acknowledgement, recognition becomes more meaningful and connected to their lived experience. This approach encourages students to celebrate growth, effort, leadership, creativity, kindness and peer support in ways that reflect the values they want to strengthen together.

Key Teaching Ideas

Teachers can step back and act as facilitators, supporting students to think carefully about fairness, inclusion and what meaningful success can look like. Student groups can design recognition opportunities that move beyond traditional achievement and highlight different focuses, such as persistence, collaboration, creative thinking, service, courage, improvement, mentoring and positive contribution. When students discuss and agree on the criteria they use, they develop communication, decision-making and problem-solving skills while helping shape a culture where more students feel seen and valued.

Practical Application

- **Student Recognition Committees:** Form a panel of student leaders to design recognition categories, criteria and titles that reflect the values they want to promote.
- **Creative Recognition Design:** Invite students to create certificates, digital badges, shout-outs or display pieces that acknowledge effort, growth, teamwork or contribution.
- **Class Values Charters:** At the start of a term, guide each class to create a shared values charter, then build a recognition system that celebrates those agreed behaviours.
- **Peer-Hosted Recognition Moments:** Have student leaders plan and host short recognition segments at assemblies, year-level meetings or classroom celebrations.



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- **Digital Kudos Channels:** Task older students with managing a moderated, positive-only digital space where peers can acknowledge helpful actions, personal growth and community-minded contributions.

Next Steps

The [Active Education Australia website](#) has resources on student-designed recognition opportunities and values-based acknowledgement frameworks. [Anywhere PD](#) includes tools for facilitating student-led planning groups.

References and Research

1. Australian Professional Standards for Teachers – Provides the national framework for strong teaching practice, safe learning environments and ongoing professional learning.
2. Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment – Demonstrates how formative assessment and feedback improve student learning and achievement.
3. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior – Explains how autonomy, competence and relatedness strengthen intrinsic motivation, engagement and wellbeing.