Active Insight: Evidence in Action

Tip #268

One Activity, Three Levels

Overview

One Activity, Three Levels is a **simple way to differentiate learning within Physical Education lessons.** Rather than creating separate activities for different groups, teachers can provide **multiple levels of challenge within the same task.** This allows students to participate in a **shared learning experience while working at an appropriate level of difficulty.** Adjustments to **equipment, space, rules, targets or task requirements** can help students access, practise and extend learning within the same activity structure.

Key Teaching Ideas

Design activities with a **base task that all students can access** before introducing simpler or more challenging variations. Consider which elements of the activity can be **adjusted without changing the learning focus.** Provide **clear descriptions of each level** and explain how students can move between them. Monitor performance throughout the lesson and encourage students to **select the level that provides an appropriate challenge.**

Practical Application

- **Create three challenge levels within the same activity.** Eg: Provide support, core and extension options that target the same learning focus.
- **Adjust equipment to vary difficulty.** Eg: Use different ball sizes, weights or striking implements while keeping the activity structure the same.
- **Modify space and targets.** Eg: Change distances, playing areas or target sizes to alter the level of challenge.
- **Adjust rules or conditions.** Eg: Increase decision-making demands, limit time or introduce additional movement requirements.
- **Allow movement between levels.** Eg: Encourage students to move up or down levels as their performance changes during the lesson.

Next Steps

Use TREE Model resource on Anywhere PD to adapt quickly and effectively. Flexible differentiation supports inclusion, engagement, and progression for all learners in shared activities.

The TREE Approach is informed by inclusive education, adaptive physical activity, and the Australian Sports Commission's Playing for Life philosophy (Australian Sports Commission, 2015).

© Active Education Australia 2026