



Active Insight: Evidence in Action

Tip #270



Differentiation Using the TREE Model

Overview

TREE (Teaching Style, Rules, Equipment and Environment) is a **practical framework that helps teachers modify activities to match different levels of challenge and ability**. By adjusting teaching style, rules, equipment or the environment, teachers can make activities more accessible or **more demanding while maintaining the same learning focus**. Small changes can influence **movement opportunities, decision-making, skill application and participation** within an activity. Using TREE allows students to **work towards the same learning intention through different pathways**.

Key Teaching Ideas

Begin by identifying the **learning focus** and considering whether **Teaching Style, Rules, Equipment or Environment** could be adjusted to improve access or increase challenge. Select the **TREE element most likely to influence student performance** before making changes to the activity. Trial **small modifications** and observe how students respond rather than redesigning the entire lesson. Review adjustments throughout the lesson and refine them as needed to keep students working towards the intended learning.

Practical Application

- **Adjust Teaching Style.** Eg: Use demonstrations, questioning, peer coaching or direct instruction depending on the level of support students require.
- **Modify Rules.** Eg: Allow extra bounces, additional passes or modified scoring systems to change the level of challenge.
- **Change Equipment.** Eg: Use larger balls, different striking implements or larger targets to adjust task difficulty.
- **Adapt the Environment.** Eg: Increase or reduce playing space, change boundaries or alter activity layouts to influence movement and decision-making.
- **Use a combination of TREE strategies.** Eg: Adjust teaching style, rules, equipment and environment together to match the needs of the activity while maintaining the same learning focus.

Next Steps

[Use TREE Model resource on Anywhere PD](#) consistently across lessons. This supports adaptable teaching, inclusive practice, and meaningful progression in physical education learning environments.

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).

