



Active Insight: Evidence in Action



Tip #526: Active Awards for All

Overview

Active awards give every student a fair chance to be recognised for the way they take part in movement lessons. The focus is not only on who is the fastest, strongest, or most skilled. Students can be noticed for trying something new, staying involved, helping others, showing leadership, improving a skill, or bringing a positive attitude to the lesson. This helps students understand that contribution can look different from one person to another. It also gives teachers more ways to recognise students who may not usually receive awards but are making a real effort and playing an important part in the class.

Key Teaching Ideas

Use a broad range of award categories so different strengths are noticed. Change the categories from time to time rather than using the same ones each week. Be clear about why a student is receiving an award and link it to something they did in the lesson. Notice the student who keeps trying, the one who helps a classmate, the one who listens carefully, or the one who steps forward to lead. Awards should feel genuine and connected to what actually happened. Keep a simple record so recognition is shared across the class and does not keep going to the same students.

Practical Application

- **Try Something New Award:** Recognise a student who had a go at an unfamiliar activity or skill. The award can still be given even if the student did not complete the task successfully. The focus is on their willingness to try.
- **Keep Going Award:** Give this award to a student who stayed with a task when it became difficult. Notice the way they kept practising, changed their approach, or asked for help.
- **Team Player Award:** Recognise a student who included others, shared equipment, encouraged a classmate, or helped the group work together.
- **Personal Best Award:** Celebrate a student who improved on their own previous effort. This may relate to skill, confidence, participation, or focus.
- **Ready to Help Award:** Notice a student who helped set up equipment, explained a rule, supported a partner, or took responsibility without being asked.
- **Active Contributor Award:** Recognise a student who joined in, stayed involved, and made a positive contribution across the lesson.
- **Quiet Achiever Award:** Acknowledge a student whose effort may not always be noticed straight away. This might be someone who works steadily, listens carefully, or makes gradual progress.



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- **Positive Leader Award:** Recognise a student who guided others in a calm and respectful way. This could include leading a warm-up, helping organise a group, or making sure everyone had a turn.

Next Steps

Use strengths-based approaches for awards. Inclusive recognition that values effort, improvement, teamwork, leadership, and participation helps build confidence and belonging.

References and Research

1. Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (v9) – Emphasises the development of personal and social skills including leadership and teamwork.
2. Australian Physical Literacy Framework (Sport Australia, 2019) – Connects positive reinforcement with the development of lifelong physical activity habits.
3. Achievement Goal Theory (Nicholls, 1984) – Supports recognition structures that emphasise personal mastery, effort and self-referenced improvement rather than comparison with the performance of others.
4. TREE Model (Australian Sports Commission) – Guides the modification of environments to ensure equitable opportunities for success and recognition.