Active Insight:
Evidence in Action

Tip #527: Weekly Recognition That Works

Overview

Weekly recognition helps reinforce the positive behaviours and contributions that support active participation, learning and belonging. A simple and consistent routine can acknowledge effort, personal progress, working well with others and taking an active part.

Recognition does not need to be formal or time-consuming. A brief award, class acknowledgement or positive message can reinforce what is working well and encourage students to continue contributing in meaningful ways. Over time, these moments help build a classroom culture where effort, progress and participation are valued.

Key Teaching Ideas

Use recognition to highlight behaviours students can continue to build on, such as persistence, cooperation, willingness to participate and support for others.

Keep feedback specific and encouraging. Move beyond general praise such as “Good job” by identifying the action that made a difference. For example, “You kept working through the challenge and adjusted your approach.”

Ensure recognition reflects a broad range of positive contributions. This may include improvement, teamwork, leadership, encouragement, problem-solving, consistent participation or helping others feel included.

Keep the process inclusive and avoid comparing students. The purpose is to reinforce positive progress and contribution, not to identify one “best” student.

Practical Application

- **Establish a Weekly Recognition Routine:** Use the final few minutes of the week to acknowledge students who demonstrated effort, improvement, teamwork or positive participation.
- **Explain What Was Recognised:** Clearly describe the behaviour or contribution. For example, “You encouraged others and helped your group stay involved.”
- **Rotate Recognition Categories:** Use categories such as Personal Progress, Positive Teammate, Consistent Effort, Inclusive Participation or Willingness to Try.
- **Invite Student Acknowledgements:** Ask students to recognise a peer who supported their learning or contributed positively during an activity.
- **Acknowledge Different Forms of Participation:** Include contributions such as careful listening, thoughtful communication, organisation, problem-solving and growing confidence.
- **Celebrate Personal Milestones:** Recognise progress towards individual goals, such as joining a new activity, practising a challenging skill or contributing more confidently.

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- **Share Positive Feedback with Families:** Occasionally send a brief message describing a student's progress or positive contribution.

Next Steps

Keep recognition simple and easy to maintain. Regularly acknowledging effort, progress, teamwork and participation helps students stay motivated and supports a positive class environment.

References and Research

1. Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (v9) – Supports the ongoing development of strategies that promote positive interactions and wellbeing.

2. Australian Physical Literacy Framework (Sport Australia, 2019) – Highlights the role of consistent positive feedback in building physical literacy.

3. Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997) – Explains how specific encouragement and positive feedback can strengthen students' belief in their ability to succeed in movement settings.

4. Achievement Goal Theory (Nicholls, 1984) – Emphasises the importance of regular, effort-based feedback in maintaining a mastery motivational climate.

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