Active Insight: Evidence in Action

Tip #530: Inclusive Recognition for All

Overview

Inclusive recognition gives students different ways to experience success and contribute during movement lessons. Students may show progress by trying a new activity, improving a skill, helping a group, making a thoughtful decision or becoming more confident in their participation.

Recognition is most meaningful when it reflects the individual student and what they are working towards. It should acknowledge genuine progress and contribution without expecting every student to succeed in the same way. This helps create a learning environment where students understand that their effort, choices and actions matter.

Key Teaching Ideas

Recognition is like many aspects of teaching! It is done best when it is planned in advance where possible. Consider the different ways students participate throughout a lesson, including how they respond to feedback, work with others, manage challenges and contribute to group activities.

Connect recognition to each student's starting point. The same achievement may look different for different learners. For one student, progress may mean refining a movement skill. For another, it may mean joining a group, communicating an idea or staying involved throughout the activity.

Use clear and specific language so students understand what they have done well. Comments such as, "You adjusted your approach after the first attempt," or, "You helped your group make sure everyone had a role," provide more meaning than general praise.

Offer different forms of recognition. Some students may enjoy public acknowledgement, while others may respond better to a quiet comment, written feedback or a message shared with their family. Recognition should build confidence without placing students in an uncomfortable position.

Practical Application

- **Ask Students How They Prefer to Be Recognised:** Give students options such as private feedback, a class acknowledgement, a written note or a message home. This helps recognition feel positive and appropriate.
- **Use Individual Participation Goals:** Work with students to identify a realistic goal and acknowledge progress towards it. Goals might relate to confidence, effort, communication, skill development or involvement.
- **Record Positive Learning Moments:** Keep brief notes about student progress during lessons. Use these observations to provide specific feedback and ensure recognition reflects a broad range of contributions.
- **Use End-of-Lesson Reflections:** Ask students to identify something they improved, contributed or handled well. This helps them recognise their own progress and understand that success can take different forms.

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- **Highlight Helpful Actions:** Acknowledge students who support the learning of others by sharing equipment, explaining a task, encouraging a peer or helping a group solve a problem.
- **Review Recognition Practices:** Consider whether the same types of actions are regularly acknowledged. Expand the focus when needed so recognition reflects participation, progress, decision-making, cooperation and personal responsibility.

Next Steps

Consider how recognition is experienced by students, not only how it is delivered. Use different approaches, connect feedback to individual progress and make sure each acknowledgement is genuine and specific.

References and Research

1. Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (v9) – Focuses on inclusive practices and respecting diversity in physical activity settings.

2. Australian Physical Literacy Framework (Sport Australia, 2019) – Supports the development of social skills and inclusive attitudes through movement.

3. TREE Model (Australian Sports Commission) – Provides a practical framework for adapting environments to ensure all students can succeed and be recognised.

4. Achievement Goal Theory (Nicholls, 1984) – Emphasises a mastery-focused environment where success is measured through learning, effort and personal improvement rather than comparison with others.

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