



Active Insight: Evidence in Action



Tip #557: Scaling Programs Across Year Levels

Overview

A strong activity can often be used across several year levels when the learning focus, rules, equipment and decision-making demands are adjusted. Scaling a program does not mean teaching the same lesson to every class. It means keeping a useful activity structure while changing what students are expected to notice, perform and understand. This saves planning time while ensuring the learning remains appropriate for each year level.

Key Teaching Ideas

Start with the learning outcome for each year level, then adjust the activity to match it. Decide which part of the task needs to change, such as the skill demand, number of rules, playing area, equipment, opposition or level of decision making. Avoid changing everything at once, as this can make it difficult to identify what students are learning.

For younger students, keep instructions short, reduce waiting time and provide repeated opportunities to practise. Use larger targets, softer equipment, fewer rules and clear boundaries. For older students, increase the need to make decisions by adding defenders, tactical conditions, role responsibilities or performance analysis.

Keep the basic lesson structure consistent where possible. For example, use the same entry activity, skill practice and modified game sequence across several year levels, but change the teaching focus and success criteria. This allows teachers to reuse familiar routines without lowering expectations.

Plan the easiest version of the task first, then identify two or three ways to increase challenge. Adjust one feature at a time so students understand what has changed. Challenge can be increased by reducing space, increasing speed, adding pressure, using a smaller target or limiting time and touches. Use observation to decide when to progress the activity. Move students forward when they can complete the current task with control and consistency, not simply because a set amount of time has passed.

Practical Application

- **Scale a Passing Activity:** Foundation students roll or pass a large ball to a stationary partner. Middle primary students pass while moving into space. Upper primary students pass under light defensive pressure. Secondary students apply passing decisions within a conditioned game.
- **Change One Constraint:** Use the same game across several classes and alter one feature for each year level. This might include the size of the playing area, the number of defenders, the time allowed with the ball or the number of passes required before scoring.
- **Set Different Success Criteria:** Younger students may focus on sending and receiving with control. Older students may focus on timing, movement off the ball, communication or selecting the best option under pressure.



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- **Prepare Equipment Levels:** Set up equipment in advance from easier to more challenging. Include larger and softer balls, different target sizes, varied striking implements and marked distances so the task can be adjusted quickly.
- **Use Age-Appropriate Questions:** Ask younger students what helped them complete the task. Ask older students why a strategy worked, what changed under pressure and what adjustment they would make next.

Next Steps

Choose one activity currently used across multiple year levels. Write a separate learning focus and success criteria for each group, then identify the specific rule, equipment or space adjustment needed to match the level. Use adaptable program design and explore [The Ultimate PE Program](#) to find ready-made scope and sequence to support your PE planning..

References and Research

1. Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (Version 9.0) – Establishes the curriculum expectations for developing movement competence, health literacy, personal and social capability, and lifelong participation in physical activity.
2. Australian Sports Commission. (2019). Australian Physical Literacy Framework – Defines physical literacy as the development of physical, psychological, social and cognitive capabilities that support lifelong participation in physical activity.
3. Australian Sports Commission. Playing for Life – Promotes game-based, inclusive and student-centred approaches that maximise participation, enjoyment and skill development.