



Active Insight: Evidence in Action



Tip #827: Movement and Indigenous Perspectives

Overview

Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into physical education and movement-based learning invites students to reflect on the cultural depth, historical understanding, and a commitment to reconciliation. Traditional games, movement practices, and stories connected to Country offer students experiences that build cultural respect alongside physical skill. When teachers approach this work with genuine consultation, appropriate resources, and a focus on the cultural significance of the activities, students develop empathy, cooperation, and a broader understanding of Australia's diverse physical heritage.

Key Teaching Ideas

Culturally responsive teaching engages authentically with First Nations perspectives on movement and community. Resources such as Yulunga: Traditional Indigenous Games provide a respectful starting point, with games that emphasise cooperation, observation, and ecological connection. Where possible, consultation with local Elders or cultural educators adds depth and authenticity to the learning for students. Teachers can frame these activities by sharing the cultural context and geographical origins of each game, helping students understand movement as a carrier of cultural knowledge and community values.

Practical Application

- **Yulunga Traditional Games (Australian Sports Commission):** Introduce games such as Buroinjin or Gorri, sharing the traditional name, language group, and original purpose of the activity before students play, and returning to the cultural context in the debrief.
- **Cooperative Target Challenges:** Use traditional games that require collective effort rather than individual dominance, discussing how these activities historically built community cohesion and connection to Country.
- **Storytelling Movement Sequences:** Students create movement sequences inspired by the movement patterns of native Australian animals, focusing on respectful interpretation rather than performance.
- **Connection to Country Walks:** Lead an outdoor movement session focused on observing and moving through the local environment with intention, discussing the significance of caring for Country and the relationship between people and place.



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- **Reflective Yarning Circles:** Conclude movement sessions by gathering students in a circle to reflect on the cultural concepts of respect, sharing, and community they experienced during the activity.

Next Steps

The Australian Sports Commission Yulunga Traditional Indigenous Games provides teachers with a collection of traditional Indigenous Games and their cultural contexts for use in school settings.

References and Research

1. Australian Sports Commission: [Yulunga Traditional Indigenous Games](#) - A comprehensive resource of traditional Indigenous games and their cultural contexts for use in school settings.
2. Sport, Education and Society: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy - Research on integrating Indigenous perspectives respectfully in physical education.