

Spark Certification

Self-Paced Training Guide — Read Before the Quiz

achievoedu.com.au | Tier 1 of 4 | ~1.5 Hours | 2026

Before You Start

This guide covers everything assessed in the Spark certification quiz. Read the Background section first — it explains the research behind why the platform is built the way it is — then work through all four modules before attempting the quiz (10 questions, 80% pass mark, unlimited attempts). Total time for reading plus quiz is about 1.5 hours, and counts as 1.5 hours of CPD aligned to AITSL Standards 3, 4, and 6.

NO PREREQUISITE

Spark has no prerequisite — it's designed as part of onboarding for any classroom teacher or staff member at an enrolled school, whether you're brand new to AchievoEDU or have been using it informally for a while.

Background — The Research Behind Recognition

AchievoEDU isn't just a digital rewards chart — the design choices behind it (instant feedback, specific reasons, wellbeing check-ins, house belonging) are grounded in established educational and psychological research. Understanding this background will help you use the platform more intentionally, not just mechanically.

Positive Reinforcement (Skinner, Operant Conditioning)

B.F. Skinner's work on operant conditioning showed that behaviour followed by a positive consequence is more likely to be repeated. Recognition points are a direct application of this: a student does something positive, a point follows almost immediately, and the behaviour is reinforced. Timing matters — the closer the reward is to the behaviour, the stronger the association, which is exactly why AchievoEDU is built for in-the-moment awarding rather than end-of-day summaries.

Skinner's research also distinguished between continuous reinforcement (rewarding every instance) and intermittent reinforcement (rewarding some instances, unpredictably), noting that intermittent schedules often sustain behaviour longer over time. This is part of why badges, milestones, and variable rewards store items work alongside simple points — not every positive action needs an identical, predictable reward to stay effective.

Positive Education & the PERMA Model (Seligman)

Positive Education applies positive psychology to schooling — teaching wellbeing alongside traditional academic skills, rather than treating them as separate concerns. Martin Seligman's PERMA model describes five elements of flourishing: Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment.

- Positive emotion — the genuine encouragement built into every recognition notification
- Engagement — house competitions and challenges that draw on student interests and effort
- Relationships — peer visibility on leaderboards and staff-student recognition moments
- Meaning — recognition tied to your school's actual values, not generic praise
- Accomplishment — visible progress through points, badges, and milestones

AchievoEDU's four core components (Recognition, Houses, Wellbeing, Rewards) were built to touch each of these five elements — which is part of why the platform pairs a behaviour/recognition system with a wellbeing check-in, rather than treating them as two unrelated products.

The Evidence Base for Positive-to-Corrective Ratios

RESEARCH NOTE

Research on Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in classrooms commonly points to a ratio of around 4 positive interactions for every 1 corrective interaction as a benchmark associated with the strongest improvements in student behaviour and classroom climate. Most teachers, without deliberate effort, operate far below this ratio.

This is the direct evidence base behind the “aim for 3–5 students per day” guidance you'll see in Module 2. It isn't an arbitrary number — it reflects a broader body of classroom research showing that shifting attention toward positive behaviour, deliberately and consistently, produces the largest measurable gains in engagement and behaviour.

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan)

Self-Determination Theory identifies three psychological needs that drive genuine, sustained motivation: autonomy (a sense of choice and control), competence (a sense of capability and growth), and relatedness (a sense of connection to others). Recognition done well supports all three — it highlights a student's own choices and effort (autonomy), demonstrates visible progress (competence), and is often social and visible to peers and family (relatedness).

A WORD OF CAUTION — THE OVERJUSTIFICATION EFFECT

Research also shows that over-relying on extrinsic rewards for behaviour a student was already intrinsically motivated to do can sometimes reduce their internal motivation over time (the “overjustification effect”). This is why specific, meaningful recognition — not just points for their own sake — matters. Points are the mechanism; the message behind them is what sustains motivation long-term.

Specific (“Process”) Praise vs. General Praise (Dweck)

Carol Dweck's research on praise found that praising the process — effort, strategy, persistence — builds resilience and a growth mindset far more effectively than praising fixed traits (“you're so smart”) or giving generic, unspecific praise (“good job”). This is the research basis for AchievoEDU's optional notes field: a recognition that names the specific effort or strategy a student used is doing more developmental work than the points value alone.

Module 1 — Welcome to AchievoEDU

What AchievoEDU Is

AchievoEDU is a student recognition, positive behaviour, and wellbeing platform built for Australian schools. It's designed to sit alongside your school's existing Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) framework — not replace it. Your school's values and behaviour categories are configured directly into the platform, so recognising a student in AchievoEDU uses the same language your school already teaches.

The Four Core Components

- Recognition Points — staff award points to students for positive behaviour, instantly visible to the student
- Houses — points contribute to house competitions and leaderboards, building whole-school culture
- Wellbeing — students complete regular check-ins so staff and leadership can spot students who may need support
- Rewards — students spend accumulated points in a school-configured rewards store

These four components work together: a point awarded for Recognition also feeds the House leaderboard, and shows up in the student's Rewards balance — one action, several visible outcomes.

Logging In and Setting Up Your Profile

- Use the login link and temporary password provided by your school's AchievoEDU administrator
- On first login, set a permanent password and confirm your name and role display correctly
- Your account is automatically linked to the classes assigned to you by your school — if a class is missing, contact your admin rather than trying to add it yourself

Navigating the Teacher Dashboard

- Recent Activity — shows the points you've awarded in the last 7 days, so you can check you're recognising a range of students, not just the same few
- Class Overview — engagement stats per class, useful for spotting students who haven't been recognised in a while
- Student Profiles — click any student to see their full recognition history and award points directly from their profile
- Wellbeing Check-ins — shows whether each student has completed today's check-in (a simple tick), not their score

Module 2 — Awarding Recognition Points

Selecting a Student and Assigning a Reason

From your Class View, tap a student's name and choose a recognition reason. The whole action is designed to take under 10 seconds — quick enough to do in the moment, not something to save for the end of the day.

Behaviour Categories Mapped to Your School's PBL Values

Every recognition reason available to you has already been configured by your school to match its own PBL framework — for example, categories like Respect, Responsibility, or Community Spirit. Always choose the category that best matches your school's own language, rather than wording it differently each time. Consistency here is what makes whole-school data meaningful later.

Adding Notes and Context

- Most recognitions can include a short optional note (e.g. “helped a classmate with today's task”)
- Notes are visible to the student and, depending on your school's settings, to parents — keep them specific and positive
- You don't need a note for every recognition, but they add meaning when the moment is worth describing

This is where the “process praise” research from the Background section becomes practical: a note like “kept trying different approaches until the experiment worked” reinforces effort and strategy, which research links to stronger resilience than a note like “good job” or “smart work.”

Best Practice: Frequency, Consistency, and Meaning

TIP: FREQUENCY OVER SIZE

Frequent, specific recognition has a stronger impact than occasional large awards. Aim to recognise 3–5 students per day across your classes, rather than waiting for a single big moment. This links directly to the positive-to-corrective ratio research covered in the Background section — it's not a stylistic preference, it's the practice with the strongest evidence behind it.

- Small, everyday moment (e.g. helping tidy up, staying on task): 5–15 points
- Consistent effort across a lesson: 15–30 points
- Significant act of leadership or kindness: 30–60 points
- Special achievement or milestone: 60–100+ points

Module 3 — The Student & Parent Experience

What Students See

- A real-time push notification naming the teacher and the reason as soon as points are awarded — e.g. “[Teacher] gave you 15 points for Respect!”
- A running points balance and full history of who awarded points, when, and for what, visible on their Dashboard
- Their ranking on the house leaderboard — within their class, year level, and the whole school
- If your school has a foyer display, live recognitions and house standings may also appear there

How House Points Work

Every point a teacher awards also contributes to that student's house total. The leaderboard updates in real time and resets on whatever cycle your school has chosen (weekly, per term, or annually) — check with your admin if you're unsure which applies at your school.

The Parent Portal

- Parents can see recognitions their child has received, in the same real-time way students do
- Parents cannot see wellbeing check-in scores — only staff and school leadership have access to that data, in line with student privacy protections
- Parents receive notifications for recognitions but are not notified of every platform action — only meaningful updates

Answering Common Questions

If a parent or student asks what AchievoEDU is, the simplest accurate description is: a recognition platform where staff award points for positive behaviour, which students and parents can see in real time. It's not a discipline-tracking app, and it doesn't replace school reports.

Module 4 — Rewards & Your Class Data

Creating and Managing a Classroom Rewards Store

- Add items your class can redeem points for, and set the point cost for each
- Track stock/availability so students don't redeem items you don't actually have on hand
- Small items (pens, stickers) typically sit around 50–100 points; larger or experience-based rewards (e.g. a free period) are set higher so they remain aspirational rather than instantly achievable

Reading Your Class Recognition Dashboard

The Class Overview isn't just a summary — it's a working tool. Check it regularly to see engagement stats across your students, and specifically look for names that haven't appeared in Recent Activity for a while.

Identifying Students With Few Recent Recognitions

- Students with little or no recognition can be easy to miss in a busy classroom — the dashboard exists precisely to surface this
- Make a habit of scanning for these students at least weekly, not just when something prompts you to look

Using Data to Inform Your Next Focus

If your Class Overview shows a cluster of students with low engagement, consider a short-term focus — a class challenge, a specific behaviour category to emphasise, or simply a deliberate effort to notice those students in the coming week.

Ready for the Quiz

You've now covered everything the Spark quiz assesses: awarding points quickly, dashboard navigation, PBL-aligned recognition categories, the real-time student/parent experience, rewards store setup, reading class data, and explaining the platform to parents.

NEXT STEP

Head to the Spark quiz (10 questions, Google Form, 80% pass mark, unlimited attempts). There's no time pressure — you can retake it as many times as needed.