Beginning and Ending Lesson Activity Strategies

The following strategies and activities can be used when teaching an entire class of students with disabilities or when several students are included in a general physical education class. It is important to set a routine that is repeated each time the students enter and exit the class session. The routine provides a structure that sets up a behavioral expectation; it helps to organize the beginning and ending of a session, and provides a secure feeling to students in that they know what will happen during the class.

Greeting – It is important to greet each students as they enter the space. In this way they can be recognized for their individuality and welcomed into the class. Use the student’s name; make a comment about something they are wearing, their favorite team or other personalized comments. When appropriate use a handshake, high five, fist pound or other physical greetings.

Predetermined Spots – Assign students a place for warm-ups, listening to directions or a beginning class welcome. This strategy helps students become organized and feel secure about where to stand or sit for warm-ups or directions. Use spot markers, tape marks, lines on the floor, squad formations or circles.

We Are Glad To See You – This is an acknowledgement warm-up that recognizes each student and welcomes them as part of a group. Students are seated in a circle on the floor or in chairs. Everyone repeats the following phrase together which is accompanied by hand gestures. At the end of each sequence, one student says their name. Then, the group repeats the sequence and adds the student’s name. This is repeated for all students.

I AM (two light chest taps with both hands, one tap on each word)  
GLAD TO (two hand claps, one clap on each word)  
SEE YOU (both hands touch face below eyes)  
STUDENT says their name (hands point to the student)

Talking Ball – This activity helps students to express themselves and find commonalities among their peers. The teacher or students select a category such as favorite foods, teams, TV shows, or ice cream flavor. One student who is standing or sitting says their favorite item from the designated category and then passes the ball to another student who says their favorite category item and passes the ball to another student. Student can be sitting and roll the ball or standing and pass the ball by rolling or passing with their feet.

Pass A Move – In this activity student can be creative, practice reproducing movements, add their own style to a movement and follow a movement around the circle. This activity is like the “Wave” where one person starts the “wave” movement and then the person next to them repeats it until it travels to everyone in the circle. One student makes a move such as a hand gesture, exercise, clap and stamp rhythm and then passes it to the person on his or her right or left. The movement goes around the circle until it gets back to the person who started it. Then another person chooses another movement and passes it around.
Skill Station Warm-up – Four skill stations are set up in the space. For example, basketball shooting, hockey goal shoot, batting a ball off a tee, and bowling. On the wall are four pieces of paper, each one had the skill written on it with an accompanying picture. The students each have a name card. As students enter the space they locate their name care, select a skill and tape their name card under the skill paper they want to try for their warm-up. This strategy promotes student choice of preference for an activity and supports matching the written word or picture with an activity.

Class Picture Sequence - Display a set of pictures that shows what activities the students will be doing in the class each day. Using this strategy helps students visually see the class progression and planned activities. For example, if you are doing a set of warm-ups, then teaching ball bouncing and then using the parachute, you would have one picture showing someone warming up, then a second picture of someone bouncing a ball and a third picture of students using a parachute. You can return to the pictures after each activity to reinforce what activity was completed and what activity is next.

Around the Bases Warm-up - In this activity, students follow a baseball base pathway to perform cardiovascular, strength and flexibility exercises. Set up four bases with a cone next to each base. On the cone is a poster with the words and a picture of an exercise. You can also include a number of repetitions. Students begin at home base, jog to first base and complete the noted exercise such as, jumping jacks, then jog to second base and complete the noted exercise such as, pushups and then jog to third base and complete the noted exercise such as, sit ups and finally jog back to home base. The exercises on each base can be changed to meet fitness goals and a range of the number of repetitions can be identified to accommodate different ability levels.

Straw Walk Run Jog – This activity promotes cardiovascular and muscular endurance. Students will walk, run or jog around a designated space marked with cones. The space can be the whole gym space or only a portion. Each student is handed three – five plastic or paper straws depending on how many times they will be required to travel around the space marked space. Each time they complete a lap they hand one of the straws to the teacher or aide. They continue to lap the space until all of the straws are handed in. The teacher can designate different amounts of straws to accommodate different abilities.

Student Leader Warm-up – This strategy, for a warm-up, promotes fitness in addition to developing leadership skills and personal responsibility for choices. The teacher creates a list of warm-up exercises, teaches them to the students and leads the exercises for several classes. Then in subsequent classes, when students are familiar with the exercises, the teacher asks for a volunteer to choose one of the exercises and lead the class. The exercises are printed on a poster that is hung on the wall. A student will walk up to the poster, point and read the exercise and then lead the class. Then the teacher will ask another student to make another exercise selection. The teacher can choose the type of exercises and the number of repetitions. Exercises can change each month and include, aerobic, strength and flexibility exercises.
**Ball in Hand** - This is a strategy that addresses the sensory needs of students. The teacher will have a container of different types of small hand held stress type balls. These are balls that can be squeezed and manipulated when waiting for a turn or listening to directions. Some students need to constantly keep moving and the ball in hand keeps the movement focused on the object.

**Move and Freeze** – In this activity, students move on the teacher’s signal and stop and freeze on a sound or visual signal. For example, the teacher calls out for everyone to jog, and then she or he hits a drum, rings a bell, flicks the lights, blows a whistle or uses a sound or visual signal to indicate it is time to stop. The teacher calls out another way to move and uses the signal to stops the students. The moving words can be placed on large cards for student to match the movement to the words and the frozen stops can demonstrate different balances or shapes.

**Team Cheer** – Students create a group cheer to build unity. The cheer can be only a few words accompanied by a hand gesture or the whole body can be involved. The cheer can be performed at the beginning of class to at the end of class.

**Touch and Go** – At the end of the class a time to transition from the gym to the classroom is needed. One activity is to ask students to sit or lie down and listen to relaxing music. The teacher will touch a student on the shoulder and that is the signal for the student to slowly get up and line up at the door.

**Cool down.** – At the end of the class a time to transition from the gym to the classroom is needed. One activity is to gather students in a circle and lead several slow stretches or slow light movements. Use calming music and a soft voice.