INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Structuring the Lesson
How the content and methods of a lesson are organized is very important to the success of the lesson. There are valuable components that need to be included in each lesson such as introductions and conclusions. And there are ways which information can be presented that are more effective than others.

INTRODUCTIONS
Your introduction will be the initial “grabber” for your students. Get your students attention and interest early, and you’ll have it for the rest of class. Enthusiastic, energetic, well-planned introductions are vital!

An introduction should be like watching a commercial for an ice cold glass of lemonade on a day when it’s 90 in the shade. The commercial will probably make you more thirsty than you were before. It will entice you to follow up on the commercial and not let it go without getting excited about it and acting on it. That's exactly what an introduction should do! It should entice the students to be enthusiastic about the topic and awaiting the next experience you are about to share.

Basic components of a good introduction
1. Be positive! Have a “this class is going to be fantastic!” attitude.
2. Have a high energy level. If you expect the students to have a lot of energy and enthusiasm, you should be the example.
3. Manage students now. Make sure everyone knows what is expected from them throughout class. Be clear and positive.
4. Be organized. A well prepared introduction should flow from one point to the next smoothly.
5. Develop rapport with your students. Learning names and using them is one important aspect of rapport building.
6. Have a sense of humor and have fun right away.
7. Include an overview of activities the class will include.
8. Motivate your students to be involved and interested in class. Your students will walk in to class curious. Capitalize on that “window of interest”. Make the class relevant to them.
9. Cover your concepts, main ideas, right away. What is the purpose of the class?
10. Connect this class to students’ daily lives. Help the to immediately see the relevancy of what you are teaching.
11. Assess students’ initial knowledge level. To begin “where the student is at”, deliberately assess student knowledge, skill, experience, and interest in the topic

Techniques that can be used in introductions:
1. Role-play - become a lost hunter for orienteering class, a drill instructor for the ropes course, a tree for trees and keys. Role-plays catch student attention and educates at the same time.
2. Storytelling - open with a story pertaining to the class. People love stories, and stories teach at many different levels.
3. Setting - Arrange your area in a physically different way. Sit on the floor in a circle, on sleeping pads, meet outside at a campfire ring, etc.
4. Challenge students - Get students thinking right away. Give them information that will make them think, rationalize, conceptualize, etc.
5. Involve the students - Look through microscopes at aquatic invertebrates or plant parts, examine animal parts for animal signs, explore bird props for birds class.

The first 10-15 minutes of a class are exceptionally important. More than any other specific time during class you affect the mood for the entire class. Involve and interest the students now. Their responses
during the conclusion begin right here. Following a well-planned introduction your students should be “thirsting” for more!

CONCLUSIONS
The conclusion, or the big finale, is just as important as the introduction. It should be dramatic, emphasized and a “grabber.” You should never skip, smooth-over, or slight a conclusion. After spending 2 3/4 hours in your class, you and your students deserve a grandiose ending.

Conclusions, just as the introductions, should be well thought-out and organized. Be well prepared and professional. While the introduction entices them into the class, the conclusion ties the whole class together. It’s the final impression of class, the last thing they hear and the beginning of what they will be thinking about the class when they leave.

Keep in mind the following:

1. **PLAN TIME FOR A CONCLUSION.** Great conclusions don’t just happen. They’re planned, starting with leaving sufficient time before the end of class for a complete conclusion.
2. **REVIEW THE ENTIRE CLASS.** Class has probably just completed a great activity. That’s what is foremost in everyone’s mind. What has happened in the entire class? Stir up memories to set the stage for a conclusion.
3. **TIE IN THE CONCEPTS.** Everything you did in class was for a purpose, show that purpose in the conclusion. Process information rather than just having students regurgitate it.
4. **MAKE IT PERSONAL TO THEM.** Help them figure out how this class effects or is affected by their daily life. Explore pertinence, not only at Wolf Ridge, but at home and around the world. For example, how can they conserve water at home after Stream Study class?
5. **EMPOWER THE STUDENTS.** Bring in current events and time. What was it like in the past? What’s happening now? What CAN it be like in the future? Your students should feel the power they have as they make everyday choices. They should effect their world through love and caring, not guilt.
6. **INVOLVE THE STUDENTS.** As a teacher, you need students’ input to evaluate their understanding and progress. Let the students do some of the talking, share insights and stories, hopes and dreams.