



A Simple Way To Calm An Excitable Class

By **Michael Linsin** on December 17, 2016

Excitability is a major cause of misbehavior.

Which is why it is present in virtually every classroom where the teacher is struggling.

You can feel it the moment you enter the room.

There is an unmistakable buzz, a live wire of tension, a jitter of frenetic energy.

Like the students have been mainlining triple espresso.

By contrast, well-behaved classrooms are peaceful.

They're calm and unhurried. They're relaxed and contented, yet lost in the business of learning.

Although there can be a number of causes, excitability is an area that is entirely under your control.

You see, students take their cue from you. So if you're stressed and uptight, if you're flustered and rushing around, it will reflect in their behavior.

[I've written about this topic before](#), but today I want to share with you a simple technique you can use anytime you like, but especially if you notice your students becoming restless, fidgety, and poised to cause trouble.

It's proven to first settle your own nervous energy as well as lower your stress. It will help you relax, think clearly, and begin enjoying your day.

But the best part is that it will sweep excitability right out of your classroom and help your students focus on the here and now.

So what is this miracle technique?

It's to slow down. It's to begin moving deliberately and gracefully. It's to smooth out your movements, motions, and actions and downshift to a lower gear.

Now, this isn't a technique that requires you to use the power of your mind to overcome stress and tension, which can be exhausting and not always effective.

You don't have to talk yourself out of being anxious, trick yourself into being calmer and more cheerful, or fight against your nature.

You just have to move slower.

Those who practice Tai Chi know this phenomenon well. The very act of articulating the elegant movements of this ancient martial art has a unique way of eliminating unwanted energy and restoring emotional equilibrium.

The idea is to decelerate your body – and your mind will follow. This doesn't mean that you have to move in slow motion or in any way that is noticeable to your students or those around you.

Just ease up on your pace *a little* and your breathing will deepen, your muscles will soften, and you'll begin to feel more composed and confident.

But what's so cool about this technique is that it's contagious. Your **calm presence** will spread from one student to the next and fill every corner of your classroom.

It will quiet the buzz and settle the unsettled. It will still the tap-tap of pencils and hush the rustle of restlessness.

It will remove any and all disquieting feelings and usher in contentment, cooperation, and self-awareness.

Restoring your classroom to its optimal state of learning.