



## Fun Way To Increase Urgency, Motivation, And Academic Performance

By Michael Linsin on May 13, 2017

Success is secured ahead of time.

It's something you set your students up for through detailed instruction.

You make *your content compelling*.

You show them – model for them – what you expect.

You provide precise steps to follow.

You practice, review, take questions, and check for understanding.

In this way, you know with a high degree of certainty that your students will succeed *before* sending them off to do independent or group work.

If you don't have this confidence, if you don't feel they're ready to be *truly independent*, then you stop, back up, and reteach – or approach the topic from a different angle.

This is good teaching.

It saves time in the long run, improves learning and retention, and keeps the success-momentum train rolling from one lesson to the next.

But there is one more thing you can do to increase your chances of success.

It's a strategy that bridges the gap between what your students know, and just learned from you, and actually putting it into practice.

You see, it's common for students to struggle to get started. They freeze up and blank momentarily on what they're supposed to do, which can affect their overall performance.

So, while they may be intellectually ready to begin their work, they're not always psychologically ready. In other words, they may not have the motivational oomph they need to dive right into their work.

This is a common phenomenon and the reason why many students seem to take forever to get into the flow of concentrated effort.

A fun and easy way to give them that extra push is to build anticipation just before giving your 'go' signal. The strategy only takes a few seconds, but it never fails to get students going.

The way it works is that, the very moment you're ready to send them off on their own, you're going to **stop and pause**.

So it may sound something like, "When I say 'go' you're going meet in your groups and begin your assignment. Ready . . . set . . ."

**Now you pause.**

Give it a good five seconds. Then, just when it becomes awkward, even unbearable, you're going to ratchet up the anticipation even more by saying something totally out of left field.

Something like:

*"Have you heard the joke about the guy with the dog who . . ."*

*"Hmm, I wonder what time the game starts today."*

*"Oh no! Oh my gosh! I forgot what I was going to say."*

It definitely brings some lighthearted hilarity. But in a very sneaky way, it also primes students to get down to work.

They become like Olympic sprinters, poised in the starting blocks and taut with potential energy.

Ready to blast off.

And when you do give your signal, that's what they'll do. They'll blow right by the freezing up stage and get down to work with greater urgency and focus.

Another benefit of the strategy is that you don't have to use it all the time. Toss it in here and there and it will train your students over time to begin their work without delay.

It breaks up the inertia of sitting and listening. It infuses them with energy and drive.

It makes them look forward to getting started.