



## How To Keep Your Students Calm And Focused This Holiday Season

By Michael Linsin on December 2, 2017

As the holiday season ramps up, students become antsy.

They can *feel* the midyear break just around the corner.

And their excitement builds day by day.

The weather, the music, the traditions. The decorations, the lights, the commercials.

Despite how much your school may try to avoid the reminders, it all has a way of spilling over into the classroom.

Causing excitability, restlessness, and misbehavior.

If you're not careful, the two weeks or so before vacation can be a stressful grind to the finish.

But it doesn't have to be this way. In fact, with just a few strategies it can be a time of calm and focus and even accelerating improvement.

Here's how:

### **1. Take your time.**

Your students are strongly influenced by your temperament. Thus, the more excitable they are due to outside forces, the more important it is for you to stay calm and take your time.

Pause frequently. [Speak in a softer voice](#). Move efficiently and with graceful ease. Breathe fully, *in and out*, and keep your body loose and relaxed.

Although your students may bring rambunctiousness and commotion with them from home, you control whether they keep it or surrender it out into the ether.

## **2. Provide more breaks.**

Mental and physical breaks become more essential the closer you get to vacation. So get your students up and moving frequently, every thirty minutes or so.

Lead them in a series of stretches, yoga poses, exercises, or slow deep breathing. Let them walk over to say hello to a friend and [even chat for a few minutes](#).

Include more time and opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas through pair-share and group work.

By providing the means through which they can shake out their restlessness, they'll return to their more focused responsibilities refreshed and prepared to learn.

## **3. Focus on details.**

One of the negative byproducts of over-excited students is that their work becomes sloppy and less precise. Following directions and performing routines also tend to suffer.

The antidote is to be more specific and detailed in your instruction. Add an additional modeling exercise. Ask another checking-for-understanding question.

Double down on the nitty-gritty and the chassis won't get so loose.

And if anything ever fails to meet your high-bar standards, back up to the previous transition, reestablish your expectations, and start over again.

#### **4. Increase the challenge.**

The tendency is for teachers to lighten up as vacation nears. Without even realizing it, they find themselves accepting less and asking less because they happen to be in the midst of a holiday season.

But this sends the message that it's okay to be less attentive and have shoddy work habits, that a certain amount of misbehavior is expected.

Although you should always **push the envelope** on what you ask of your students – every day of the year – the closer you get to an extended break the more critical this becomes.

Because it keeps your students on task, focus-driven, and striving to the end.

#### **Subtle But Powerful**

Effective classroom management requires you to be mindful of the moment, the time of day, and the season of the year. It takes a proactive view and a shrewd approach to potential landmines that lie ahead.

If you simply go about your business, the two weeks before holiday break can be filled with headaches, apprehension, and added stress.

But with just a few adjustments, a few tweaks to your pace, timing, instruction, and disposition, you can maintain your own sense of peace and enjoyment this holiday season.

You can subtly but powerfully alleviate the negative excitement and energy, the silliness and distraction, the impatience and impulsiveness.

And keep your class calm and focused all the way to the final bell.