



## Lesson Plan: Self-Calming Methods

### *Downshift to a lower gear, with help from your body*

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**Grade level:** High School

**Approximate time frame:** One to two class periods

#### **Introduction/rationale**

In the following lesson students will consider the influence of emotions on thinking and behavior and come to understand how managing one's emotions typically leads to better outcomes. After exploring strategies that fictional characters might use to modify their emotional response to an event, students are encouraged to think about how they might apply these strategies in their own lives.

#### **Instructional objectives**

Students will...

- Describe self-calming strategies to regulate emotional intensity
- Apply knowledge of strategies to a work of literature
- Demonstrate – through creative writing or performance – use of strategies within a work of literature

#### **Curriculum standards**

*Health:*

- Analyze healthy ways to express emotions and to cope with feelings, including the common causes of stress, its effects on the body, and managing stress

#### **Materials needed**

- Work of literature (novel, chapter, or short story)
- Whiteboard
- Paper
- Pencils



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**Student activity/handout**

*Time for a Rewrite!*

**Student reading assignment**

*Brain Driver's Education: Operator's Guide* section: "Downshift to a lower gear, with help from your body"

**Procedures**

Note: this lesson is a good follow-up to the lesson entitled "How hot or cold does your emotional 'engine' run?" If done in conjunction with that lesson, use the previous discussion as a starting point.

Anticipatory set:

We've read many works of literature where characters' emotions are revved up high or else shut down so low they seem muted or numb. This often leads to serious trouble. What can these characters do to balance their emotions better?

**Step-by-step instructions/activities**

1. Identify a character who is experiencing high or low emotional intensity. (If done in conjunction with the lesson "How hot or cold does your emotional engine run?" use the previous discussion as a starting point; if not, take a few minutes to review the character and the work of literature.)
2. Is the intensity appropriate for the situation? Or does it negatively affect the character and the people around him or her? Allow class to discuss these questions. Encourage students to support their assertions with evidence from the text.
3. If the level of intensity is not appropriate to the situation (choose a work of literature where this is the case), ask students what this character might do to move into a more balanced emotional state. Write the students' suggestions on the board. (It may help to ask them what they themselves do to manage their emotions.)



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4. Provide students with the Student Reading Assignment entitled “Downshift to a lower gear, with help from your body,” in the *Brain Driver’s Education: Operator’s Guide*.
5. Review the self-calming strategies presented in the reading assignment. Check off the options the students suggested if there are any “matches.”
6. Concluding assignment: Give students the Student Activity handout entitled “Time for a Rewrite!” This assignment can be done as an individual or group assignment, a written assignment or a presentation. Feel free to modify the handout to meet your classroom needs.

**Assessment**

Use class discussion and Student Activity handout assignment to assess student understanding.