

Tips For Traveling Teachers

Many teachers, especially new secondary teachers and "specials" elementary teachers, don't have their own classrooms. Instead, they travel from room to room. This can be quite a challenge. Here are some things you can do to minimize the stress and maximize the learning time.

Get a Rolling Cart

This is the most obvious of the things you can do to make your traveling teacher life easier, yet we often observe traveling teachers with their arms over-full, frantically running to their next room, trying desperately not to drop anything. There is no need for this, though. A rolling cart will make transport of you and your things from room to room a 1000% easier.



Use Available Technology

Any technology you can use to pre-write your board information will make the transition at the beginning of each class go more smoothly. Find out what is available in each room, and make decisions based on the technology available. Instead of spending the time between classes writing a warm-up activity on the board, for example, write the warm-up the night before on an overhead transparency, in powerpoint, or if all else fails, on butcher paper. Then project or hang up whatever you created and you are ready to go.



Secure Your Own Space

Life will be easier once you secure your own wall space, file cabinet space, and/or shelf space, for your materials and your student work, in each room you use. Unfortunately, this is sometimes problematic as some teachers are reluctant to yield any wall or cabinet space. However, if you are teaching one class per day in a veteran teacher's room, for example, and the veteran teacher is teaching five classes, then you should be entitled to one-sixth of the space. Because most traveling teachers are new and therefore non-tenured, most traveling



teachers never speak up about their need for space. Most of the time, the teacher whose room it is will happily yield a little wall and cabinet space. But when they do not, consider having your mentor teacher or department head or administrator go to bat for you. When a mentor requests wall and file space in the room on behalf of their new teacher, and let's the veteran teacher know up front that the request is coming from them, not the new teacher, the mentor can shield the new teacher from any negativity that may come up, thus freeing up the new teacher to continue working in harmony with the veteran teacher.

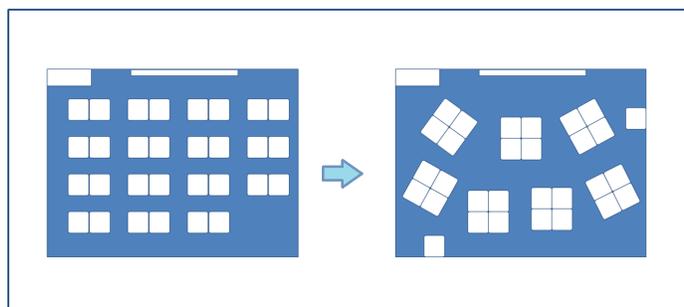
Once you have **cabinet space**, photocopy class sets of handouts that you may need, and place them in each of your classrooms. For example, there's seven minutes left in class, and the students are finished with the activity you assigned. If only you had that poem or worksheet or math handout, you could keep them on task for the rest of the period. Because you don't want to have to lug a class set (or series of class sets) around with you all the time, place your handouts in each classroom, and store them in a file cabinet or drawer in advance, so that you can pull them out on a moment's notice.



Use **wall space** to post student work, announcements, personal touches about yourself, or anything else you might do if the room were actually yours.

Change the Seating

If you would prefer a different seating arrangement than what exists in the classroom, change it. For example, if the room is set up with desks in groups of four, and you would prefer rows, simply have your students change the seating arrangement at the start of class, and then



move things back at the end of class. The amount of time spent doing this can be minimized by using visuals, such as an overhead view of the room, to get the students to set the room up as you like it and then set it back the way it was. By practicing the procedure, the students will be able to move desks efficiently. The stress saved by teaching in an environment that you prefer is always worth the hassle of moving desks.