



Drama

By Teresa Love, Elementary Drama Specialist

There is no denying it. Art on a cart, traveling from room to room to teach, can be tricky, but there are some perks too. Here is a list of things you can remember when the cart seems too daunting.

Good Things

1. You are in a classroom space which implies legitimacy for drama as a school subject.
2. You gain insight into the atmosphere of where students spend most of their learning day and capitalize on procedures and materials already in place.
 - You can adopt classroom protocols into your practice because they are posted on the walls. Or note when yours are different because drama learning may require something in contrast to the order of the class.
 - You can use what is on display in the classroom as fodder or reinforcement for your own teaching.
 - There are already supplies such as pencils, paper and markers in the classroom. (Be sure to ask the classroom teacher if using this stuff is acceptable to her/him. Give a heads-up reminder prior to your visit.)
 - If everything is very rigid, no wonder they break out in your class. Conversely, if the room is disorganized or unstructured students may find your way of teaching overly demanding.
3. Rehearsing and performing in a classroom setting puts into practice the concept of using nontraditional spaces for drama work. We can learn through drama “anywhere,” and noting how a space influences artistic choices happens authentically in this sort of environment.
4. Your cooperating teacher might stay in the room and absorb some of your technique. You might pull the teacher into the lesson or request support with classroom management. Also, the teacher might see how the students are learning, behaving, and performing in your lessons, which can lead to new insight and more effective collaboration.
5. You don’t lose time organizing students to walk back to class, lunch, recess, or bus.

Challenges

1. Other classrooms nearby might be distracted by productive noise or projected voice. It's necessary to be a good neighbor, but proximity is sometimes hard to deal with.
2. Some teachers are married to their room arrangement. While drama teachers may feel that any space can support drama, classroom teachers may not want to have furniture moved.
3. Your own protocols aren't posted, nor your word wall, or other visual cues for students.
4. Your technology isn't set up just for you and your demands.
5. Sometimes the child who succeeds very well in your drama classroom space is not one who succeeds well in the traditional classroom. Their lingering feelings of failure or discomfort with taking risks may not change as easily as compared to moving to an entirely different space. Similarly, "groups" often exist in classrooms (such as table groups, or carpet seating) that can inhibit children's risk taking. So, extra attention might need to be given to dismantling the social status quo.

Timing and Pacing

1. Show up neither too late or too early. Reaffirm the closing time for the session (who knows what schedule changes have happened that morning about which you are unaware.) Know where the clock in the room is, or wear a watch.
2. Make sure you start your cool down with enough time to reach your next appointment.
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4. Have a ritual for focusing students to be ready for drama work

Teachers and Aides

1. Ask quickly if any student is leaving early or being pulled out. A quick, "Anything I should know about?" can often save you grief.
2. Do not assume that the "Teacher's Chair" in the room is yours, especially if the teacher is in the room.
3. Make sure you and the teacher are clear about "taking" and "returning students."
4. If your teacher is amenable to moving desks, take time teaching students a routine so that students are safe and efficient as they make the room ready for drama or classroom mode. They should work well with cues, be as silent as possible and know to be ready as soon as the room is clear.

5. If the teacher leaves the room and someone, not an aide, comes to the classroom asking for a child to leave be sure to double check with the office. If the aide stays in the room, be sure to find out if the aide can assist you or if they have other assignments while you are teaching. Do not assume.

Materials

1. I find rollaway luggage better than an actual library or cafeteria cart.
2. Plan carefully for what you REALLY need. It is discouraging to wheel in a ton of stuff that appears messy or unorganized (even if in your mind it's neither). Students may not care, but you may feel (or be) judged by the classroom teacher, the parents in the hall, or your principal as you push a mess of stuff by the office. Ask yourself...
 - Do you really need that pretend microphone, or could you pick up an eraser or marker in the classroom and endow it with the characteristics?
 - Do you need all those costumes, or can you use lots of material flats or scarves the children can adapt, and then fold up easily to put away?
3. Ask the teacher to use HER/HIS nametags as opposed to you carting around your own. Set up protocol. This may mean that students should have the nametags on BEFORE you enter the room.
4. Consider using an art portfolio for your visuals that can be put up on the board with magnets rather than having to ask permission to use the white board.
 - If necessary to use the white board, always ask permission to erase from the teacher (not the students.)
 - Laminate your posters and visuals since you will be packing and repacking them frequently.
5. Set protocols for students being able to use puppets, costume pieces, etc.
6. Consider asking that students keep drama portfolios in the classroom.
7. Use your own iPod or iPad with speakers as opposed to relying on classroom technology.
8. Children often want to use chairs or classroom property for scene work.
 - Be careful about this. Don't take it for granted that, for example, the coats on the coat hooks can be used for pirate sails, unless your classroom teacher is clearly in support.
 - Encourage students to use bodies to represent buildings rather than, say, a stack of chairs. Don't let them get hung up on making signs or name tags for characters.
9. Divide handouts before you teach that day and place them in manila envelopes or folders so you know you have enough for each class.

Personal Belongings

- Dress simply and wear good walking shoes. Wear layers if you need to go outside to get to a classroom. Have a protocol for where you place your sweater/coat so you don't always have to chase after it, trying to remember where you left it. You might assign a student to be your "stagehand" to ensure you take everything you brought with you.
- Leave your purse/backpack in a secure place at the beginning of the day and only take your phone with you. Consider a tablet as opposed to laptop.

More Tips

- K-2 children are frequently assigned specific seats on the floor in the classroom. Be cognizant of this so you don't cause anxiety in the littles who are just trying to do the "right" thing at school when you say something like "sit anywhere you can see the action."
- Still use the art specific words such as stage directions (up, down, stage left, stage right, back-stage, etc., or "let's do this proscenium style" even though you are in a classroom space.
- If noise levels are a problem, explore other levels for students such as musicality in their voices, the power of the whisper, diction, energy as opposed to volume. Choose silent theatre games and pantomime work, do ASL applause. Shut the door! And anecdotally check with neighboring classroom teachers later if you feel that your classes might have disturbed others.
- Don't let being in a classroom prevent you from inviting audiences such as parents and other classroom groups to share a performance. Just plan accordingly, make sure audiences have space to see and hear. Resist the temptation to move a sharing performance to a new space without rehearsing in that space. For example, if you are moving to the media center to accommodate more people, be SURE to let children rehearse in the space and make adjustments from their classroom space. Don't let people talk you out of this!
- Occasionally schedule drama experiences outside of the classroom, and treat these experiences as a special privilege.





Music

By Emily Soderberg, Elementary Music Specialist

Going from room to room to teach students can have its challenges. However, here are a few of the hidden benefits of teaching as the traveling music teacher.

Benefits of Arts on a Cart

1. The music teacher gets to see students in their home room. They already have seating arrangements, and desks are often labeled with students' names, which will help the music teacher learn names faster.
2. Classroom teachers often have a visible management plan in place. It becomes easier to implement the classroom teacher's plan in the music lessons and have meaningful results because it is a continuation of what the children already know.
3. The teachers are more likely to participate in the lesson because they are in the room. Even if they don't participate, the classroom teacher sees the great things the music teacher is doing and is often more supportive.
4. Being in different classrooms increases contact and communication with the classroom teachers because the teachers often talk to each other while coming in or out of the classroom, thus building stronger relationships.
5. The music teacher and classroom teacher don't always have time to talk about what the children are learning in every subject. Seeing what is up on the boards and walls of the classroom provides the music teacher with ideas for additional integration.
6. If emailed ahead of time, the classroom teachers are willing to have files open on the interactive whiteboard and learning targets written up on board. This saves the music teacher time, but also helps the classroom teacher see specifically what is happening during music.
7. The music teacher is able to use the classroom teachers' resources which might include a voice amplification sound system, interactive whiteboard, document camera, classroom computers, iPads, and chromebooks.
8. If the music teacher takes time at the beginning of the year to train the students to move desks quickly and quietly the classroom teachers are more likely to use the music activities in their own practice because the process is so fast. The students may also ask their classroom teacher to sing a favorite song or play a song game during non-music time because they know how to play it in their classroom.

9. The music teacher can ask to add music words to the classroom teacher's word wall, which provides students with more frequent reminders of what they are learning in music.
10. Students have their own pencils and places to put workbooks in their classroom, so it takes less time to get students on task for a writing activity.
11. The music teacher is in control of starting and ending classes on time instead of waiting for the classroom teacher to arrive, to drop off, or pick up his or her class.

Suggestions for Dealing with Challenges

1. Where to store equipment and personal items can be a challenge. The music teacher might have to request a closet or desk space where music items can be stored. When traveling from room to room, leave personal items in a secure place at the beginning of the day and only take what is necessary to teach classes.
2. A cart offers limited supply space for the equipment needed for lessons being taught throughout the day. Plan lessons ahead of time, and if there is more than will fit on the cart use a labeled plastic storage box for each grade or class that can quickly be switched between classes.
3. If the music teacher forgot an item for the lesson there is no time to go get it. If possible, train responsible students to know where to go to get things and also return things if a music item got left in the classroom during a previous lesson.
4. Remembering where and when to be at each class is a challenge. The music teacher should laminate the schedule, tape it to the cart, and refer to it often. Also know where a clock is in each room, and verify that each clock is set to the same time, or use your own watch.
5. Some furniture does not easily move or classroom teachers may not want to have furniture moved. Be creative and adapt singing games as necessary.



Dance

By Miriam Bowen, BTS ALP Dance Specialist

What is art on-a-cart? It is a creative workshop on wheels that an arts-learning specialist uses to transport arts-integrated educational experiences, from classroom to classroom, where a dedicated space is unavailable, or when an in-classroom environment is more effective for learning. Art on-a-cart can be quite an adjustment, especially for a dance specialist who is accustomed to moving and teaching in large, open spaces. As you begin, it is easy to wonder how you will be able to teach your art form and explore movement with the students in such a small and occupied space as the classroom. In my years of teaching dance in the classroom I have identified pros (opportunities) and cons (challenges with ideas to overcome them) as well as additional suggestions for survival and sustainability.

Pros - Opportunities

1. You go to the students learning space. You are on their turf.
2. Your teacher is present and can more easily become involved.
3. For the most part, you are in control of timing, and can be there a little early. You can let yourself be seen, and the teacher knows it is time for art integration. When you are in your own room, teachers often come late, taking valuable time from your lesson.
4. With the smaller space, there is a close feeling to the culture of your class.
5. You do not need a microphone to have your voice be heard. If you would like to use one, the teachers are willing to let you use theirs along with their maps, projectors, and other such equipment. It is nice to have those things present, and using the teacher's equipment is a good way to involve them in your lesson.
6. You can partially rely on the set classroom behavior management policies and have the teacher there to help reinforce the already set plan.
7. The small classroom space dictates that group work be part of the lesson, allowing students to develop social skills. Dividing into groups is great for division and fractions in math lessons, not to mention creating story problem practice.
8. Students love to use desks for drumming rhythms. When teaching prepositions, desks can be used as objects of the preposition.
9. The students love to push their desks back to create floor space.
10. We reach hundreds of students, and getting to know them by name is a challenge. The name tags on their desks help with name memorization and identifying students.
11. You are seen pushing your cart through the hallways, creating opportunities for bright, cheery,

and appropriate greetings that can create anticipation for your upcoming visit to each classroom. You create awareness of the BTSALP in your school.

12. You can decorate your cart with ideas/messages you want to share. As I received notes/drawings from students throughout the years, they were filled with details of the items on my cart and attached to it. The students are great observers.

Cons- Challenges

1. Depending on your office space, storing your things can be a challenge. Before I had a desk space I used my car. When I got a desk space I used it for many things, but still found myself packing a lot of things to and from my car. It helps to get a wagon or some kind of case with wheels. We use a lot of props in our teaching!
2. A cart offers limited supply space. I carefully chose what I needed for each class and would often change out items for my next class subject.
3. Using a cart forced me to be organized and have everything I needed for my lesson right there with me. If you forget an item there is no time to run and get it. In your own space things are just there and ready for you to use. It takes time to get your system down so be patient with yourself and the process.
4. Being in the right place at the right time with the right lesson and needed items for that lesson can be a challenge as you start a year and are getting accustomed to your routine. Keep your schedule right with you and check it often.
5. Space is a big challenge in an occupied classroom filled with desks, chairs, tables, computers, and book shelves—not to mention human bodies. It is especially crowded when you need to have your informances in the classroom! At first glance, it can seem like there is no place to dance. Remember your vertical space. When you cannot go out, go up.

Suggestions for Survival and Sustainability

Even with its limited space, I came to enjoy the environment of the classroom for art integration. The students are learning the subject you are integrating right in that space. It gives them opportunity to develop a better sense of self-awareness relative to their surrounding community.

Out of necessity, I began my teaching with the dance concept of **Space**.

Personal Space – The personal space bubble around you that helps keep you from bumping into anyone or anything.

General Space – The large space you are in. We imagine our space as protected by a “jello wall” that will bounce us away if we get too close to any wall or object in the room.

Axial Movement – X-marks the spot. This is movement that does not travel but remains in your own personal space. This can be next to the student’s desk or somewhere in the room.

Locomotor Movement – We learn of pathways that we can find to move from point A to point B through our general space. This is especially fun when we follow the teacher as our leader like a train through the classroom. It is a great way to get the teacher moving with their students.

Levels – The students can explore the levels of high, medium, and low going vertically in space rather than horizontally.

Negative and Positive Space – We use our eyes to identify the negative spaces (the empty places) to know where it is best to take our movement.

Prepositions – Use prepositions such as under, over, upon, around, behind, beside, between, and throughout to identify where we can make a shape or take our movement. The student’s desk and/or chair can be used with respect, as the object of the preposition. They love to explore shapes under, on, or upon their chairs!

Group Work – The students at my school wear uniforms and I often use shirt colors to divide them into groups. There are many ways this can be done. Red shirts will be the performers while white and blue are the audience. This gives the students an opportunity to practice both performance and observation skills. The class can be divided into fractions such as half, thirds, fourths etc. I like to create story problems and have the students do the math in dividing the class.

Pushing the Desks Back – This is something I only do a few times a year. We push the desks back for dancing circles, exploring Native American and folk dancing, and for performances where the students show their composition work to each other. I would push the desks back more often if it did not take up so much of my allotted time in the classroom.

The creative process for problem solving and learning, which we seek to instill in our students, is the very method we must practice ourselves to find imaginative and resourceful solutions to the challenges we face. When we do, obstacles great and small can become springboards to success! Art-on-a-cart can be an effective and enjoyable tool for arts-learning specialists and students in schools that lack dedicated space for traditional movement experiences; even where sufficient space is available and routinely employed, these portable laboratories of arts-integrated learning can also carry fun and stimulating experiments with the arts right into the classroom when that is the optimal environment for learning!



Visual Art

By Elicia Gray, BTSALP Visual Art Specialist

There is no denying it. Art on a cart, traveling from room to room to teach, can be tricky, but there are some perks too. Here is a list of things you can remember when the cart seems too daunting.

- 1. Classroom Teacher.** The classroom teacher is not far away. In fact, she/he is usually in the room and able to offer support and help when asked.
- 2. Routines.** The class routines are already established. Students know the protocol in their own classroom and it is relatively easy to add your daily routines to those that are already in practice.
- 3. Storage!** If you have a wet painting or glue that needs to dry, classrooms usually have extra counter space or tables that are available. Also, classroom teachers can store artwork during the week so you do not need to keep it on the cart.
- 4. Supplies!** Students already have a pencil and most basic tools ready, and classroom teachers are usually happy to share supplies that belong to them.
- 5. Extra work time.** Many times, when I run out of art time, the classroom teacher will offer to have students finish projects during their free time, or after they have finished a classroom assignment.
- 6. Cleanup time.** With a good routine, cleanup is usually a snap, but when you are teaching in someone else's classroom students are more accountable because there are at least two adults keeping an eye on the mess. Also, when art time is over students will continue to clean up the mess throughout the day. If I have a particularly helpful teacher she/he will dismiss the art teacher and continue to clean the room even after they are gone.
- 7. Rewards & Consequences.** Sometimes when a specialty teacher only has students once a week it is difficult to give consequences for bad behavior that hold any weight. When you are in another teacher's classroom it is simple to use their already existing program and students are acutely aware of rewards they can receive or demerits they may accrue.
- 8. Technology.** I have found that other teachers are happy to share the technology in their classrooms. If I need to show an image or a video clip the system is already in place and the teacher is right there to help if anything goes wrong.
- 9. Integrated lesson plans.** Aside from meeting at the scheduled PLC times, art teachers who are on a cart have the added bonus of entering another classroom and seeing first-hand what the students are studying. More than once the bulletin boards have given me ideas for future lessons.
- 10. Relationships with Teachers.** Increased interaction with classroom teachers usually means increased respect and admiration. Entering another teacher's space once a week gives the art teacher a chance to build strong friendships and build strong connections with colleagues.