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The Movable Class: How to Class-Manage for More Active and Healthful Lessons

Furniture—namely, desks and chairs—defines our classroom spaces and often the way we teach. Some teachers are fortunate: their classrooms have hybrid desk-chairs that can be picked up and moved. But even these are often arranged in rows, and they stay that way. Throughout much of the world, classroom desks are heavy, sometimes bolted to the floor, sometimes with benches attached, and shared by three or four students. At universities, lecturers face auditoriums with tiered rows of connected, immovable seats.

Traditional classroom design offers a clear message: "Students should sit still and listen." But today's research tells a different story. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010, 6) "found positive associations between classroom-based physical activity and indicators of cognitive skills and attitudes, academic behavior, and academic achievement."

Teachers of young learners have long known that if you want kids involved in your learning scheme, you had better reward them with action. Teachers of older students, at grammar schools and high schools—certainly at universities—have been slower to take up the idea, associating movement with play, a lack of seriousness, and loss of discipline.

My purpose in writing this article is to persuade teachers of English at all levels to allow for more student movement, even if just a little. I call this approach to a dynamic classroom space a Movable Class. To begin, let's compare the principle differences between a Movable Class and a traditional class (see Figure 1).

Maybe your class is fine the way it is. Why go to the effort to add more movement?

Here's why. By adopting Movable Class methods, by eventually thinking *movable*, you will use more group work and do so more effectively; you will design more student-centered activities; you will become a more confident classroom manager and vastly increase the range of your teacher's tool kit; *and* I think you will have more fun. I know students will.

But the single most convincing reason to give the Movable Class a try is that getting students out of their desks is good for their health.

In the first part of this article, we will see how lack of movement, especially prolonged sitting, has serious health consequences. In the second part, we will examine how teachers can break that sitting cycle by

bringing movement to traditional sedentary tasks. The third part will show how to train students for safe and effective movement.

But don't worry. You don't need to commit to the approach completely right now. You can bring the basic elements of the Movable Class to your lessons piece by piece, over time, in a way that's comfortable for you and your students.

PART 1: WE SIT TOO MUCH, AND IT HURTS

Think back to when you were small. Did you swing your legs when you were sitting in a chair? Of course you did. It wasn't your fault. Your brain told you to fidget. "Movement or physical activity," Maria Montessori told us in her book *The Secret of Childhood*, "is … an essential factor in intellectual growth" (Montessori 1966, 97). Around the same time, Lev Vygotsky posited that children's learning "could be advanced through physical play, practical activities and the influence of an encouraging social environment" (Levine 2014, 17).

You are an adult. But does a brisk walk help you think? It did for philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who said that "all great ideas are conceived by walking." Now there is evidence that "the human brain is designed to think while moving" (Levine 2014, 18). "Exercise," claims Dr. John Ratey, author of *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, "provides an unparalleled stimulus, creating an environment in which the brain is ready, willing, and able to learn" (Ratey 2008, 10).

Now, I understand that English teachers cannot be expected to introduce swimming, Pilates, volleyball, or wood chopping into lessons. What you *can* do, though, is snap the cycle of extensive sitting that is predominant in our classroom culture. This can be accomplished by adding simple standing activities or Fast Action Breaks (FABs, I call them, although they go by many names). This is easy, and it's fun, and it works for all levels and ages.

Take that small step and you become part of the solution, not the problem—because today sitting *is* a problem. For most of human history, about two million years, we were hunter-gatherers (Levine 2014), and "close to 100 percent of the biologic existence of our species has been dominated by outdoor activity" (Åstrand and Rodahl 1986, 1). Suddenly—in evolutionary terms—in the last 50 or 100 years, we have begun to sit at work and at school, on the way to work, and when we get home. Our bodies were not made for that.

What if you exercise a few times a week? Great. Keep it up. But the health consequences associated with sitting exist *even if you exercise regularly* (Levine 2014; emphasis added). Thirty minutes at the gym does not

Movable Class	Traditional Class
Students get out of their seats at least once per lesson.	Students, especially at higher levels, sit throughout the entire class period.
Tasks with movement are seen as positive learning opportunities.	Movement among students is perceived as a lapse in teacher control or as bad behavior in students.
Desk-based activities are recast to incorporate movement and/or more pair work and group work.	Most activities are desk-based.
Teachers readily reconfigure desks, chairs, or the students themselves.	Teachers accept the classroom environment as it is.

Figure 1. A comparison of a Movable Class and a traditional class

erase the negative effects of 12 to 18 hours of sitting. This is because when you sit, your body goes into a kind of shutdown. "Our hearts function sluggishly … blood flow is not returned efficiently from our legs … our brains lull and creativity falls" (Levine 2014, 83).

It is true that global life expectancy is longer now than in the past (Riley 2001), but prevalent diseases that afflict us today are different. Diabetes, heart disease, some cancers, and dementia have been connected to extensive sitting (Corliss 2015). Obesity—being very overweight—is caused by poor diet and inactivity and is a gateway toward these chronic diseases. In the United States, obesity in children has tripled since 1980 (Levine 2014). Not coincidentally, diabetes—again, largely caused by inactivity, poor diet, and the resulting weight gain—has increased in the same time frame, from 108 million afflicted globally in 1980 to 422 million in 2014 (World Health Organization 2017).

Prolonged sitting isn't the only culprit, but it's serious enough that the scientific community has coined the term *sitting disease*.

Breaking the sitting cycle

Here's the great news, English teachers! To break the sitting cycle, all you need to do is … *stand up* (I'm writing this article standing up) because even short movement breaks help:

> The impact of movement—even leisurely movement—can be profound. … The muscle activity needed for standing and other movement seems to trigger important processes related to the breakdown of fats and sugars within the body. When you sit, these processes stall—and your health risks increase. When you're standing or actively moving, you kick the processes back into action. (Levine 2017)

This means, to begin with, that we should introduce short, nonintensive activities in our classes.

PART 2: BRINGING MORE MOVEMENT INTO THE CLASS

Whether your class session is 40 minutes or three hours, you can incorporate breaks. They don't need to be long. According to Dr. James Levine, "within two minutes" of standing up, "on a fundamental cellular level, your body is changing" (Levine 2015). Kathleen Doheny (2011) reports on research by Neville Owen indicating "that even breaks as short as one minute" may help. So just a minute or two—that's all you need as a break to protect students from the harmful effects of too much sitting.

You can start with very simple Stand-Up Breaks, then move on to Fast Action Breaks and Team-Building Activities.

Stand-Up Breaks

Here are a few Stand-Up Breaks that will work for most any age or classroom environment, even a big university lecture hall.

Stand Up and Stretch. You can lead the class, if you feel comfortable: shake out your fingers, clasp your hands behind your head and lift your arms, take a few deep breaths. Jog in place if you feel comfortable.

Phone Check. Give students two minutes to check their phones. Your rule, though, is that they must get out of their desks and do so standing.

Roll Call on the Wall. Put two or three sign-in sheets on the wall. Midway through class, give students three minutes to sign their name. Thus, you get attendance *and* you protect your students from uninterrupted sitting.

Meet and Greet. Set a timer. Give students three minutes to go around the class and introduce themselves to someone they don't know. If they know each other already, let them discuss a question, for instance: "Does the world need more female leaders? Why or why not?"

Standing Answers. Incorporate a few minutes of questions, to which the entire group will show their answers through standing or sitting. For example, "Who went to bed after midnight last night?" Students stand if the answer is "yes." "Who went to sleep before 11 p.m.?" Yes/No questions are easy, too. They can be simple—"Do you like broccoli?"—or more complex: Try an Instant Standing Poll in which students stand up to give their opinion or show how they feel about an issue. Prepare a set of questions (e.g., "Are you optimistic about the future?"; "Are you pessimistic about the future?"; "Are you unsure how you feel about the future?"); after you ask each question, students stand up if their answer to the question is "yes." Then you—or, better yet, students—count the people standing and record the data on the board. (For more on answering questions with movement, see McCaughey 2015, 7–8.)

I recommend using a timer to regulate the length of breaks. It makes them an official part of class and has the effect of pressing students to take advantage of the limited time.

Fast Action Breaks

Fast Action Breaks (again, often referred to as FABs) take Stand-Up Breaks one step further, offering more action and sometimes more craziness. Some students or colleagues may accuse you of wasting time with FABs. Legitimize these activities by building them into your lessons. Make them regular events. Put them in writing on your lesson agenda or course syllabus. This allows others to see an FAB as preplanned and considered part of the course.

Here are three ideas for wilder FABs:

Dance Break. Try moving with the songs "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" or "The Hokey Pokey," both available from AmericanEnglish.state.gov. Or get the class to dance the "Harlem Shake," which basically allows you to do any movement. If you think it's for kids, watch the Norwegian Army doing it (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hpEnLtqUDg).

Bunch of Ludicrous Action Surprise Tasks (BLAST). Use these to surprise students with a variety of fun pantomimes and situations. Start a collection of movements on scraps of paper or small cards:

- "Walk like a robot."
- "Hop like a kangaroo."
- "Pretend you are eating a bowl of noodles while standing on one leg."
- "Pretend you have just finished singing an amazing song in front of a thousand people and they are applauding you."

Do five to ten of these actions and you will have reached your two-minute standing quota. Be sure to move on to the next BLAST as soon as the energy fades. After students get the hang of this activity, you can ask them to write their own BLASTs. Collect these, put them in a box, and soon you will have a massive archive. The ideas in Figure 2 can get you started.

Try These BLASTs

Walk barefoot across a very hot street.

Pretend to paint your name on the ceiling.

Try to catch a butterfly with a butterfly net.

Chop wood.

Climb a rope.

Have a mime conversation with a partner where you say nothing but gesture a lot.

Put on a shirt that is much too small.

Walk up a steep mountain.

Walk down a steep mountain.

Figure 2. BLAST ideas

Find the Thing. Announce that you have lost some small item: an eraser, an almond, an earring. Students all rise from their desks and search for the thing, with the winner receiving an award. (No candy!) Make a personalized certificate or paper ribbon. It's important that students can find the hidden thing without using their hands: that is, they are not allowed to open drawers or turn wastepaper baskets upside-down. The item should be visible just by walking and looking. However, you might choose to hide the item in the hall or somewhere else outside the classroom. (See McCaughey [2014] for a similar activity called "Wild Goose Chase.")

There are literally thousands of break activities online. They go by names like Energizers, Warmers, Brain Breaks, Camp Games, and Team Building. One good website for these is Eat Smart, Move More (http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Energizers/EnergizersForSchools.html).

Start with one FAB per lesson. Get students in the habit of refreshing their brains and recharging their muscles mid-lesson.

Team-Building Activities

If you can devote *more* time to your FABs, they will be more meaningful. The following activities require learners to solve problems together and thus are great for team building. By the way, businesses often use similar activities to foster cooperation and strengthen morale. You'll find more at the website Fun Retrospectives (http://www.funretrospectives.com/category/energizer/). Here are some that can be done in crowded classrooms, and the variations are endless:

Human Arrangements. The whole group will have to exercise the ability to communicate (we hope in English) and work out solutions. All students organize themselves into one line, according to a designated arrangement. For example, the class might line up by calendar date of birth, from January 1 to December 31. Or students can arrange themselves by age, oldest to youngest or youngest to oldest, by shoe size, by how long it took them to travel to class that day, or by how recently they had a haircut, danced with a partner, or ate at a friend's house.

Human arrangements based on physical attributes are quickest of all: line up according to height, shortest to tallest or tallest to shortest. Students can arrange themselves into separate groups instead of lines, according to eye color or hair color. Or you can try quantities, arranging from smallest to largest: how many things students have in their pockets and purses, how many brothers or sisters they have, or how many letters they have in their names.

You can even try Human Arrangements by degree: how much they like ice cream, soccer, or homework; how much they fear spiders. This last one will involve some debating and negotiation of positions as students try to put themselves on a scale, like these:

Love Homework ——————— Hate Homework

Comfortable with Spiders ——— Afraid of Spiders

Math and Number Circles. The potential for using students as units in movable math calculations (and to practice numbers in English) is limitless. For example, you can have three students form a baseline group in an open space in the class. You can use different totals when you start your baseline group. Let's try three. Three students rush up to the designated space. Next, say, "Times three." Thus, since three times three is nine ($3 \times 3 = 9$), an additional six students will rush up to join the group. They can hold hands to form a circle. When the circle is closed, we know that the calculation is complete. Now say, "Minus two." Two students must leave the circle so that it totals seven. "Plus five," now five students rush forward to join

the circle, for a total of 12. "Divide by two." Six students leave the circle. "Now multiply by five." And so on.

Yes, there is a degree of chaos as some students try to join or exit the circle but do not fit into the correct numerical result. That's great! That's why the activity is fun. Cooperation is a skill. As the teacher, you may be inclined to direct students, to take a leadership role. Don't. This is their problem to solve on their own.

What if you have 50 or 90 students? Just make several baseline groups. So instead of starting with one group of three students, you would start with four groups of three, and all four groups would go through the same series of calculations. They will feel the competition, too.

Human Shapes. This is a variation on Human Arrangements. Call out a shape and a number: "Squares of eight!" Students will rush to form a nice neat square of eight persons. Naturally, if you have 28 students, four of them will be left out. That's okay! What makes the activity fun is that all students move quickly in order to integrate into a shape before they are left out. Quickly move on so that those who were left out have another chance: "Triangles of six!" "Circles of five!" "Ovals of seven!" "Straight lines of nine!" Incidentally (and importantly) while you do this, you are training students to move efficiently, which will be the subject of Part 3 of this article.

Bringing movement to traditional tasks

Because you are an English teacher, you will eventually want to incorporate more and more language practice into your movement activities. In this way, you will be simultaneously helping students learn English and contributing to their health. Once you get accustomed to using breaks regularly, the next step is to convert your favorite *desk-bound* English-learning task to *desk-free*.

Think of an activity that your students do often: reading dialogs in pairs, listening to a song, using vocabulary flashcards, watching a video, writing dictations, taking multiple-choice quizzes. Chances are, learners do these things sitting at their desks. But it is not difficult to make them movement-friendly. Let me offer up a task that is as old as the hills … .

Homework Check (Movable Style)

When I was a budding young English teacher in Moldova, I spent part of class time doing Homework Check. I'd say, "Nadia, please read number one of exercise 2C," and around the room we went, with each student reading a sentence aloud. The process seemed to work. Everyone focused on the same exercise at the same time. Students did not complain. And I, the native-speaking teacher and center of attention, directed things, adding clever explanations and witty asides. A bonus perk was that Homework Check took up a lot of class time, which, in those days, I considered a good thing.

Now, there's nothing *wrong* with this traditional way of checking homework. It's fine, once every now and then. But we can make checking homework movable *and* more interesting.

Here's one way: use the walls. Make an answer key to the exercise, handwritten or photocopied. Cut this key up into strips, with one or two answers on each strip, and post these on the walls throughout the room, or maybe even in the corridor outside.

Students work in small groups at their home base, which can be a desk. Group members can leave their home base to search for answers on the walls, but they are not allowed to carry their homework or a pen. They must find the answers somewhere on the walls and hold those answers in their minds until they return to their home base. There, they cross-check answers with teammates. This requires the extra skills of organization and cooperation. It's usually quicker than the round-robin homework check, so you will

still have time to discuss any questions or disagreements as a class afterwards.

In fact, if you want to really challenge your students, include an *incorrect* answer among those posted on the walls. Warn students that you have done so. That will inspire them to look closely at answers, with a doubting eye (a critical-thinking skill that we need in life when people try to tell us what is right!).

Speaking practice in the Movable Class

Below are five questions that could form the basis of a speaking task.

1. What's the highest thing you have ever jumped from?
2. What's the coldest you have ever been?
3. What's the most scared you have ever been?
4. What's the most beautiful thing you have ever seen?
5. What's the longest trip you have ever taken?

In a traditional, nonmovable class, the teacher probably asks the entire class the first question and then waits for a student to raise his or her hand and volunteer an answer. Or the teacher *cold-calls* (selects students whether they volunteer or not). Either way, students remain in their seats.

A traditional teacher might use pair work, which is an improvement, but it's likely that the teacher will—in an effort to *avoid* movement—form pairs from students who happen to be sitting next to each other.

A Movable Class teacher will definitely use pair or group work. She or he will have some method for pairing students unpredictably (using Human Arrangements to form random lines, drawing names from a box, asking students to find the person with the nearest date of birth, etc.). Thus students *move* to sit together, and then they discuss.

The true Movable Class professional may go a step further, thinking, "If we go to the trouble to rearrange student groups or pairs, why bother sitting down at all?" Pairs or groups can stand and discuss, as we often do in real life at parties, at conferences, or in the corridors at school.

Are you reading this article sitting down? Take a break. Try reading while you stand.

With students in a line according to a Human Arrangement, the teacher can easily split them into two parallel lines (Standing Partner Lines). Students can then talk to each other as pairs for a limited amount of time (say, one minute), then rotate after each minute so that every student speaks with five or ten different partners.

Is it worthwhile to use such complicated maneuvering? Absolutely. Here are some advantages:

- Students know they have only one minute to speak, so they are not shy and speak without fear of mistakes.
- Since there isn't time to discuss *all* questions with a single partner, students choose which topic suits them best, and you won't hear, "Teacher, we are finished."
- Students have the chance to repeat, practice, and sharpen their messages.
- Students hear multiple opinions.
- Since these are pair discussions, all students get a lot of practice; Ur (1988) calls this "high volume," when most students are on task instead of just a few, as happens in teacher-fronted discussions.
- And of course students are out of their desks, standing, gesturing, and moving.

PART 3: TRAINING FOR EFFICIENT MOVEMENT

All this talk about having students move might sound good. But I realize you also may be thinking, *Kevin* (that's me), *you haven't seen my classroom*.

You would be right. I have not. But you may recognize your teaching environment among those shown in Figure 3.

Most of these arrangements are not conducive to stand-up, moving, or group activities. But we have a few options. We can lead students outside or into the hall. We can use the existing space at the sides or front of the room. We can find lanes for stand-up activities. I have often used the aisles in auditoriums for stand-up pair work.

The point is, movement is possible in every environment. But we need to take a little time to train our students.

Training students to move

The reason that we associate classroom movement with noise and chaos is simple: we have never made our expectations clear to students. Consequently, students don't know what to do or how to move. They don't even know how to sit down or stand up quietly, efficiently, quickly, and safely.

If you don't believe me, try this experiment: ask your entire class to stand up on the count of three. "One. Two. Three. Stand up."

It will be noisy as students knock things off desks or slide chairs backwards. It will take a surprising amount of time before the noise settles into relative quietude. Sitting back down will probably be even noisier as, once students sit, they scoot their chairs forward with no regard to noise.

And it's not just students who don't know how to move chairs. Adults have problems, too. Even teachers who hate noisy classrooms do not know how to move chairs!

The basics: How to move a chair

One week before the time of this writing, I conducted a workshop for 45 teachers at a conference. We had plastic chairs and no desks, which was great because these chairs were light and easy to move. But the room had a tile floor, and as participants settled into these chairs, scooting or shifting positions, the room echoed and boomed with noise. If I wanted to involve all 45 of them in standing activities, it was going to be a cacophony.

I announced my intention to engage the whole class in movement activities (after all, the workshop was called "The Movable Class") and said that our first task would be to stand

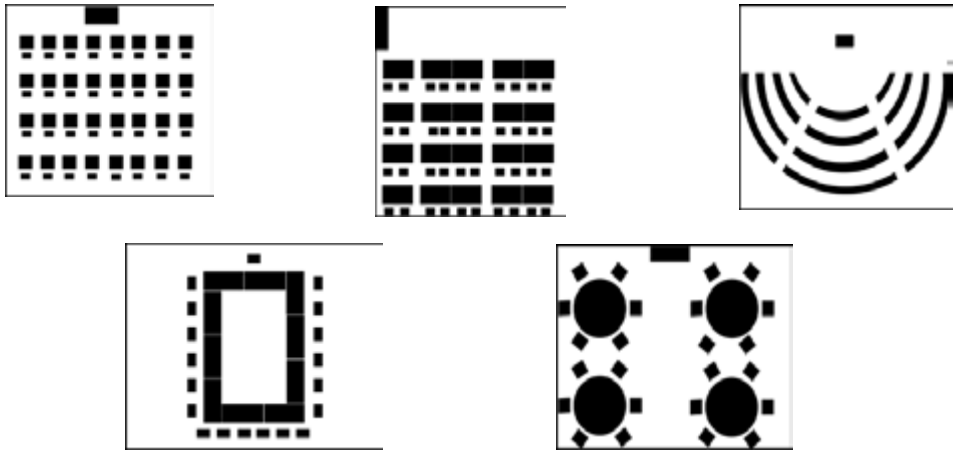


Figure 3. Various traditional classroom arrangements

up and sit down, and once we had mastered that, we would learn to move a chair.

Participants thought I was joking.

We stood up. It was noisy. We sat down. It was really noisy.

Next, I demonstrated myself. I sat down in my chair gently, without a noise, making sure it didn't scoot or slide. Then I got up. I sat down again. Then I asked the entire group to do the same. They did. They stood up. They sat down. That is training.

"Our goal," I said, "is to make any movement QEQS." And I wrote "QEQS" on the board, along with the words: "Quick, Efficient, Quiet, and Safe."

Next, I stood again and moved behind my chair. I lifted the chair. I moved a step to my left, then moved back to the right and set the chair down, very gently.

Then I asked the group to do the same, step-by-step.

We spent about four minutes on the basic training. But now every person in the room knew *how* we were going to move ourselves and our chairs. They knew my expectations for movement. And they knew how to be QEQS.

One teacher told me after the workshop: "I will never think the same way again about chairs in classrooms."

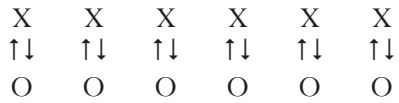
Student formations

Once students can get out from their desks and chairs quickly, efficiently, quietly, and safely, we can make formations for group work that can be repeated again and again. Here's how:

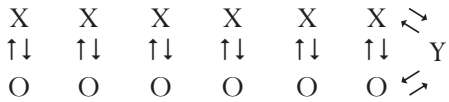
1. Give your formation a name (e.g., "Standing Partner Lines"). Having a clear name means you do not have to explain the formation over and over.
2. Have a training period, when students practice. Normally you need to devote only five minutes to training.
3. Use a stopwatch to record how long making the formation takes.
4. Use the group formation regularly (at least a few times a semester).

The formation I use most often is Standing Partner Lines because we can make that formation anywhere, indoors or outdoors, no matter how many students there are, and it gets people out of their desks, talking to each other in pairs, as we often do in our lives outside the classroom.

In Standing Partner Lines, the entire class gets up and forms two lines, with each person facing a partner, like so:



The lines don't need to be straight. They can snake through desks. They can go along the walls or down the aisle of an auditorium. If the class has an uneven number of people, the pair on one end will add a third person to make a triangle, with three people doing the task together, like this:



With one or two rounds of training, a class of 50 students can form Standing Partner Lines regularly in 12 seconds. If you have 100 students, it may take 30 seconds. It's just a question of training.

A stopwatch really helps (see McCaughey 2010). Or you can use the timer on your cell phone. To get the most efficient movement and best behavior, make a written account of *every effort the class makes to create a formation*. That makes the procedure official, like an Olympic race. Keep charts showing the

results throughout the term or the school year. This can be in a special folder or a poster on the wall, available for public viewing at all times. This way, students will always know the current time to beat, and they will be eager to do so each time they make a formation. They can compare their best time and their average time for formations against those of other classes, too. Legitimize the process further by having students sign or initial the document.

You can see in Figure 4 that on May 29 there were three training attempts at Standing Partner Lines. And you can see by the completion times that the class became more efficient with each effort on May 29. Then the class had a little setback on June 5 but broke the current class record on the next attempt, June 12. You can bet that these students will try to beat that 0:16 record the next time they do Standing Partner Lines, whenever it is.

Date	Time to Make Standing Partner Lines Formation	Witness Signature
5/29	2:02	Alyona
5/29	0:55	Francinah
5/29	0:18	Lilia
6/5	0:27	Lerato
6/12	0:16	Nat

Figure 4. Sample chart showing how long a class took to make a formation

Standing Partner Lines works best when you change partners every few minutes. To do that, have one line shuffle to the left every two or three minutes on your signal so that each person is facing a new partner.

What are some other formations? How about Standing Squares? Four students make the following formation, anywhere in the room, as long as they are standing:

X
W Y
O

Training once or twice is still desirable with each new formation. In the initial efforts, the class needs to problem-solve in order to learn what happens if one group has only three students instead of four, or if they have to move chairs and desks. Again, you will get the best results if you record each effort on a chart, with the time it took, the date, and a student verification signature.

What other standing arrangements can you think of? Standing Triangles, Standing Sixes, Standing Concentric Circles, Backs to the Wall, and Equal Groups in the Four Corners?

Furniture formations

There are times when we will need to move and arrange chairs or even desks. Desks take up a lot of space. They can be heavy. But if you instigate a training session, you can find a way to move them—or to move around them if they are drilled to the floor. Allow students time to discover the best system for moving them according to the QEQS model, perhaps instigating a debrief—a discussion—after their first attempt. How can we improve? Are two students per desk enough? Should the same two students always move the same desk, while a third person acts as spotter to ensure safety and to avoid collisions? Should you move chairs first to get them out of the way? Will quietly scooting chairs under the desks provide enough lanes for movement? It will depend on the classroom setup. If we trust students, though, and if they are old enough to move the furniture, they will likely find the best system. But only if you allow them training time.

I often use a formation called Dance Floor. That's when we move all chairs and desks to the walls of the classroom and leave the middle wide open. In some settings, desks need to be stacked on top of each other, so the opposite formation can work, too: stacking desks and chairs in the center and leaving a clear ring around the walls of the classroom. Having clear and open lanes in your classroom, by the way, will make it possible for students to get out quickly, if ever you face an emergency, like a fire.

The point is to find the best method, then repeat it, not to push things helter-skelter in a different way every time.

Train throughout the course or year

Training does not happen during only one lesson. Do it regularly, in small segments, throughout the term. Gradually make the trainings more challenging so that students increase their group-making and team-building skills. Meanwhile, make sure that your activities with movement are meaningful and fun.

And here is one more tip: find a method to deal with *stuff*—all those things that clutter the class, like coats, backpacks, books, lunches, phones, and soccer balls. We don't usually associate these things with classroom management, but we should. Things get in the way. They interfere with efficient movement.

Find a system that works for you and your students, a safe place to put these items. At the primary school next to my home in California, backpacks hang on pegs in the corridor—outside the classroom. If students need something, they can go get it. I have also seen bags and coats on hooks inside classrooms in some countries. Can you install these in your classroom? Or perhaps your students can put their belongings on the floor against one wall, in alphabetical order according to their names. Or you might have a table dedicated to bags, a closet for coats, a sign-in sheet and box for cell phones. You will have to find the solution in your particular classroom, but when you do, your classroom will be more movement-friendly.

CONCLUSION

Think about the future classroom. When you imagine it, what do you see? Probably new technologies: more mobile devices, streaming Internet, virtual field trips, machine translators, 3D printers, augmented reality.

Those things will probably happen. But foremost in my mind is physical space. I think future classrooms will have more flexibility in their design: lightweight adjustable desks at which students can stand or sit, desks that roll on wheels. There will be open spaces for physical activities, breakout areas for group work and projects. It will be a place where we can employ a large range of student-to-student formations and avoid the captivity of the chair.

The Movable Class aims to take us to that classroom, to the best of our ability, *now*. Just start small.

Even if our room is overcrowded, we can grow our Movable Class from seedlings. Allow students to stand now and then. Even in a lecture hall with 400 students, students can answer yes/no and agree/disagree questions by standing. Introduce Fast Action Breaks. Use more teams and pairs for classroom work, even for the basics like checking homework. Let students know your expectations of movement: that it can be Quick, Efficient, Quiet, and Safe (QEQS). Allow for movement training from time to time. You might even be able to create breakout spaces by moving furniture.

Today, with some in the medical community calling prolonged sitting a "public health priority" (Hamilton et al. 2008, 7), I see it as a duty to make classes more active. And if student health were not reason enough to go Movable, there's icing on the cake. Levine (2014, 161) sums up further benefits: "When students move more, their education improves"; "the more you move, the better you learn"; and "classroom behavior improves with active learning."

I understand that for some teachers all this movement talk might feel alien, or risky, perhaps impossible. There will be a few difficulties along the way. I remember my first standing-only lesson, pushing all the desks aside and doing half an hour of activities for 30 teenage girls in front of a dozen teachers. The result was that students felt free, energized, in the center of the action. Teachers were silent. But of course they were wondering, "How can we fit this

in our curriculum? What will colleagues in the next room think? And administrators, inspectors, parents, students, and curriculum designers—will they understand?" (They may not. So let them know why you are doing this. Pass along this article.)

There is an expression that I like: "We'll find a way. If we can't find one, we'll make one." That's how I feel about classroom design. Sometimes I enter a classroom, and movement looks impossible—60 kids, three to a huge heavy desk. And I think, ugh.

It's deflating and disheartening—for about a minute. But then I realize I'll find a way. And if I can't, I'll make one. The only person who will stop me *is me*. And so we start at the beginning, all of us. We practice sitting down and standing up. We practice moving our chairs. After five minutes, we're moving.

It's time to think outside the desk.

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