

Walk the Walk

Count how many times your class walks down the hall each day. Have you ever thought about these walks as not just a necessary part of getting from place to place - but an opportunity for creative movement that enhances learning? Brain science shows that exercise boosts blood flow to the brain - "even moderate exercise will supercharge mental circuits and sharpen thinking skills." Movement from place to place also raises questions about how and why students use shared spaces within the school.

What you will need:

Time estimate: 10 minutes

Materials: None!

Directions:

1. Walking in the halls is a part of your day that is all about movement, but movement within a particular set of parameters. Take a few moments to think about your school's expectations for how students move through the building, reflect on why those expectations are in place, and consider how you can use walking in the halls as an opportunity for productive movement.
2. Then, within the bounds of appropriate hallway behavior and within the limits of your students' ability to manage some controlled silliness, get creative. For younger students, this might mean walking in character - creeping like a mouse, stalking like a lion, sneaking like a spy - or using gross motor movements - marching, tiptoeing, hopping. Older students can try moving with intention, such as looking up and seeing what they notice, or doing small, slow arm circles while they walk.
3. Take suggestions from students, too - along with discussing why they ought to move in particular ways, invite students' ideas about how they can move creatively.
 - You may want ask your students to reflect: how can we be free to travel through the halls while also respecting the needs of other people who are working in their classrooms, respecting the work on the walls, and taking care of our shared space?
 - Other questions you could pose include: Do we need to walk in lines? Why or why not? Do we need to walk in silence? Why/not? Do we need to walk all together? Why/not?

Note: open this conversation at a neutral time, when you and your students frame this topic in a positive light, rather than at a time when you are responding to undesirable behavior in the hallways.