

The Borrowed Desk

Facilitator note: The engine here is stewardship: keeping what you have borrowed the way its owner keeps it, and sending your improvements up as suggestions rather than installing them. Malki is not timid - her ideas are mostly good, and one is adopted - and that is the point to protect in discussion. The story's claim is not "never improve things"; it is that you cannot know what a system is carrying until you ask why it was built, and that the person who will live with the system is the one whose call it is. The late-slip door order and the dismissal-binder drawer both encode constraints nobody wrote down (the three-thirty crowd; the grandfather reading addresses over a shoulder). Expect girls to raise genuine emergencies - a borrowed system that is unsafe or harmful should be fixed now, not noted - and Activity 4(3) gives them room to draw that line. The recipe-card coda brings the engine home without a speech: Malki undoes her own quiet renovation and replaces it with a question.

Teacher answer key

Activity 1: 1. By exit door; she re-files them alphabetically. 2. The slip can't be found - the mother asked for Goldi but the girl signed her full double name, "Brucha Goldi R.", so it sits in B while Malki scans G; the ninth-grade teacher finds it in seconds under the door order and explains it exists for dismissal crowds. 3. Run the desk the secretary's way; every improvement idea goes in the blue notebook, none onto the desk. 4. No - the binder has addresses and parents stand at the counter; the drawer exists because of the year a grandfather read a class list over someone's shoulder.

Activity 2: 1. Guess. 2. Fact. 3. Fact. 4. Guess (she adopts the bandage-drawer label and invites Malki to argue the rest next week).

Activity 3: Sample answers - 1. She optimized for how a book should look and never asked what the book was for; she didn't know about three-thirty. 2. Redundancies and odd orders often encode old problems - the initials in the corner, the door order. 3. Because the ideas aren't lost; ownership means the owner decides, and waiting is not defeat.

Activity 4: 1. (a) Runs the wheel as-is for the week; writes the three ideas down for the bunk head's return. (b) Ask why the rule exists before touching it - silly-looking rules can be carrying an old problem, like the door order. 2. Writing an idea down and handing it to its owner preserves it; it isn't lost, just waiting for the right person to decide. 3. When the borrowed system is unsafe or harmful - safety can't wait for a handback.

Activity 5: 1. SLIPS. 2. BINDER. 3. DRAWER. 4. COUNTER.

Activity 6: 1-c, 2-b, 3-a, 4-d.

Activity 7: SLIPS row 1 columns 1-5; NOTEBOOK row 2 columns 1-8; BINDER row 3 columns 1-6; COUNTER row 4 columns 1-7; DOOR row 5 columns 1-4; DRAWER row 6 columns 1-6; INITIALS row 7 columns 1-8; BANDAGE row 8 columns 1-7



Activity 8: Open response; look for "whose is it" answered honestly and at least one question to ask before changing.