

The Main Idea's Professional Development Suggestions for *Hacking Leadership*

There are many great ideas in *Hacking Leadership* that you can introduce to leaders and teachers. This section focuses on just two ways to improve teacher professional learning: individually and in groups.

I. Individual Professional Learning: Passion Projects

A. Introduction: To introduce the concept of passion projects, ask the teachers to imagine—What if they had complete control over what they learned about for professional development over the next 12 weeks with no parameters? What would they want to learn more about? What aspect of their teaching might they want to improve? What professional topics do they feel passionate about?

Share the following overview with them (perhaps on a slide) and give them time to *journal* their thoughts about the questions above.

The **passion project** model is a paradigm-shifting approach to professional development, providing two elements that traditional PD often lacks:

- Fully individualized professional learning; teachers build projects around their content-related or pedagogical interests
- Ownership over professional growth; teachers are trusted to set their own goals and direct their own learning

B. Brainstorm: After teachers have journaled about possible passion project ideas, ask teachers to volunteer to share ideas with the larger group and capture these ideas in a list to help those who may not know where to start or how to describe their interests.

C. Planning Goals and Data: Explain that there are two non-negotiables for teachers' passion project plans:

1) A **goal to improve professionally**: Teachers need to design their passion project around a goal, but they should know that because teachers grow at different rates and in different ways their goals may differ significantly. Furthermore, they should know that they have many options for meeting their goals, and can use many means from videos to podcasts.

1) A **student data component**: Teachers should collect student data related to their projects, and use that data to inform (NOT drive) their decisions.

Have teachers look at the passion project ideas they just journaled about along with the ideas in the group's brainstormed list, and ask them to choose one they might consider pursuing. Then in pairs, have teachers write a goal for professional improvement and indicate the type of student data they will collect to demonstrate improvement toward this goal by the end of 12 weeks.

D. Passion Project Planning: Teachers may refine or even change their professional learning goals once they meet with a school leader, but have them take a stab at creating a plan now. Have teachers fill out the accompanying **Passion Project Plan Template** (or email Jenn to get it) with the following questions.

Passion Project Plan

1. Professional Learning Goal:
2. Rationale for Professional Learning Goal: (How did you decide on this goal?)
3. What makes you excited about this project?
4. Project Plan: In as much detail as possible, specify what you will be doing and when.
5. Are there any challenges you foresee with this project?
6. Resources: What resources do you already know about that you will use and what types of resources do you hope to explore?
7. How can leaders and your colleagues support you in this project? Would informal meetings with a mentor or teachers who share your interest assist you with your passion project? If so, do you have any particular individuals in mind?
8. How will you measure your improvement?

Once they have filled out the template, teachers should give each other feedback in pairs before turning this in to school leaders to plan one-on-one meetings about passion projects. Here is a checklist teachers can use to review peers' forms:

- The project will help the teacher improve. (Specify how:) _____.
- The project includes several learning activities: (Specify the major activities) _____.
- The teacher will be able to tell whether he or she has improved (Specify how:) _____.

II. Collaborative Professional Learning: Study Groups on Makerspaces, Genius Hour, and EdCamps

The passion projects above provide a way for teachers to work *independently* toward their own professional growth. Below are three topics teachers can explore in *study groups* and then introduce to the entire staff.

A. *Introduction*: Let staff know they are going to divide into three groups for professional learning and then use a “jigsaw” model to research some innovative educational models of learning (for students *and* teachers) and then share these with the two other groups.

Give teachers an overview of the three learning models so they can choose one to study:

- **Makerspace** -- a space inside a school where students can tinker, play, explore and make projects of their choosing, using a variety of tools and materials. Student projects may involve sewing, building with Legos, robotics, coding, etc.
- With origins in Google and other companies that encourage employees to spend a part of their work hours pursuing passion projects, **Genius Hour** provides students with the time, structure, and support to pursue individual academic interests. To implement Genius Hour, a teacher designates an hour per week for students to work on individual projects. The teacher guides students through planning their projects, and then provides support, feedback, and opportunities for reflection as they work. (This can be for the teachers, but if you already introduced passion projects, then that’s already like a *Genius Hour* for teachers!)
- **EdCamps** are participant-driven "un-conferences" where everyone acts as both a leader and learner. Although EdCamps began as models for teachers' professional development, schools have also begun using them to support student learning.

B. *Choice and Parameters*: Have some way for teachers to choose which of the three study groups they would like to join (perhaps designate three corners of the room). Let each group know how much time they will have to work together (Time during staff meetings? Common planning time? Paid afterschool time?) Then have each group anonymously vote for a facilitator.

Let the groups know that on a given date they will each present what they’ve learned to the two other groups. Groups must include:

1. A definition of the model
2. An idea of who the school might implement this for—students? Teachers? Both?
3. An explanation of the skills the model supports and any other benefits
4. A brief example of the model in action, via a video clip or an interactive demonstration
5. A description of how a school might implement the model including potential challenges
6. Time for colleagues to discuss the model and ask questions

C. *Resources and Planning*: Have teachers bring their laptops to this meeting so groups can begin researching their chosen topic right away. First give teachers time to explore the resources for their group. Note: these resources are on the handout.

Makerspaces

- **Online articles**: Designing a School Makerspace (edutopia.org/blog/designing-a-school-makerspace-jennifer-cooper), What is a Makerspace? (makerspaces.com/what-is-a-makerspace/) and Create a school makerspace in 3 simple steps (iste.org/explore/ArticleDetail?articleid=103)
- **Books**: *Worlds of Making: Best Practices for Establishing a Makerspace for Your School*, by Laura Fleming, *Your Starter Guide to Makerspaces*, by Nicholas Provenzano, and *The Makerspace Librarian's Sourcebook*, edited by Ellyssa Kroskiand.

Genius Hour

- **Online articles and sites**: What is Genius Hour? (geniushour.com/what-is-genius-hour), 6 Tips for Getting Started with Genius Hour (edutopia.org/groups/personalized-learning/802456), student passion projects (<https://www.lifelessonlearning.com/passion-projects>), and *Bring JOY to the Classroom with Passion Projects* (<http://creativeeducator.tech4learning.com/2016/articles/passion-projects>)
- **Books**: *The Genius Hour Guidebook*: by Denise Krebs and Gallit Zvi; *Pure Genius: Building a Culture of Innovation and Taking 20% Time to the Next Level*, by Don Wettrick; *The Passion-Driven Classroom* by Angela Meiers and Amy Sandvold; and *Inquiry and Innovation in the Classroom: Using 20% Time, Genius Hour, and PBL to Drive Student Success*, by A.J. Juliani.
- **Web videos**: What is Genius Hour? (<https://youtu.be/NMFQUtHsWhc>), Genius Hour Project Examples (youtu.be/1MVR9qc21nA)

EdCamps

- **Online articles and sites**: Join the EdCamp Movement!(edcamp.org/attend), What is EdCamp? (edcamponline.weebly.com/what-is-edcamp.html), Why EdCamp? (edutopia.org/blog/why-edcamp-kristen-swanson)
- **Book**: *The EdCamp Model: Powering Up Professional Learning*, by Kristen N. Swanson and Kevin Jarrett
- **Web videos**: EdCamp (<https://youtu.be/gr7teMAk-hA>), EdCamp 101 (<https://youtu.be/I7DwCI7j0Bg>)

Next, have groups plan out agendas for their 3-4 meetings. Below are a few ideas for what to include in each meeting to ensure that the group will be ready with the 6 items (see above) they will be presenting to the two other groups for the jigsaw.

<i>Meeting #1</i>	<i>Meeting #2</i>
<p>Resources we will explore: (choose from the ones above or find others) Goal: By the end of today’s meeting, we will have:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A definition of the model we can share with the rest of the school 2) An idea of who the school might implement this for—students? Teachers? Both? 3) An explanation of the skills the model supports and any other benefits of the model 	<p>Resources we will explore: (choose from the ones above or find others) Goal: By the end of today’s meeting we will have:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) An example of the model in action, via a video clip or online article 2) An activity to introduce the model to the school – an interactive demonstration or a hands-on way to engage with the model 3) A description of how the school might implement the model, including potential challenges and ideas for next steps