

# Tips for Genius Hour in the Classroom

## What is Genius Hour?

Genius Hour began with a strategy used by Google. Google would give their engineers 20% of their time at work to devote to working on projects of their own choosing. Google soon realized that more than 50% of their greatest tools/ideas were a result of this time. The engineers followed their passion and developed some awesome projects for Google! Google scored! Other large corporations are also using their strategy.

## What Does Genius Hour Look Like in a Classroom?

Typically, a teacher provides 60 minutes per week to allow students to explore projects and ideas that they are passionate about. Creativity and innovation are encouraged. Why? Unfortunately, all too often in the classroom, students have difficulty understanding the purpose in what they're learning. For instance, how often do we hear students say "Why do we have to learn this stuff?" However, when they're given time to explore their own passions and interests at school, it is hoped that greater innovation, engagement and worthwhile learning happens as it does in large corporations.

## Some words of advice for teachers wishing to do the Genius Hour from teachers who are doing it:

- ◆ Even unstructured time needs structure
- ◆ You need to understand and be comfortable with *inquiry based learning (lots of information online)*
- ◆ Students need time to figure out what they might do and they will need a great deal of guidance to ensure that their ideas are manageable to do in the classroom
- ◆ Spend some time sharing the projects done by other students in your country
- ◆ The graphic organizers here will be useful tools to help students focus their ideas
- ◆ There needs to be a final product and sharing time
- ◆ Younger students will need much more assistance
- ◆ It's worth sending a letter home to parents to let them know what Genius Hour is all about and how it connects to the Common Core or the curriculum in your area
- ◆ Each child should have a plan, what they need to accomplish, how, where they will research it, what they will share and what they hope to learn or discover
- ◆ There should be documentation of the process. Students should journal what they've done at the end of each genius hour which could be online through a free blogger or by pencil/paper
- ◆ You will need to be a facilitator throughout the process to ensure students aren't wasting their time and to help guide them.