**The 20% Project**

**Harden-Style**

**What**

You are my guinea pigs. So there’s that.

The 20% project has been utilized in successful companies for quite a few years. 3M and Google have both used the 20% project with fascinating and innovative results (think: Post-It notes & masking tape, Gmail & Google News).

**When**

We will be utilizing *approximately* 20% of our in-class time together to work on these projects. In other words, all Fridays that we have school as well as a few dates that are not Fridays. Because our school schedule is kind of wonky (some Mondays off, some Fridays off, some Thursdays off, etc.), I had to be a little creative with dates. I have provided a schedule of dates for you. It is important for you to take note of the dates so that you are prepared for whatever you need to work on.

**Why**

Teachers are no longer expected to simply lecture every class period and students are no longer expected to simply take notes. Education is shifting to a more student-centered classroom; in reality, my classroom has almost always been more student-centered than teacher-centered. The 20% project allows for creativity and intrinsic motivation for students to learn based on their passions. We have too many students wanting to become doctors simply because they have to take science classes anyway and doctors are respected and wealthy. We have too few students wanting to go into a career field that they are actually passionate about because *they have no idea what they are passionate about*.

**How**

Alright, finally: the practical side.

1. Individual or small group
   1. Caveat: working with others also means that you might not be working on something that you are truly passionate about. You will have to compromise. You will have to do things that you don’t want to do. The awesomeness of working on your own means that you have complete control over what you do and how you get it done. You are also working on this project for an entire year. Will you be friends (or friendly) with this person for an entire year?
   2. I encourage you to work on your own.
2. Choose a project that you would not do in another class and that is new to you.
   1. You can get ideas on the internet if you need them BUT I suggest you try to come up with ideas on your own first so that you aren’t influenced by others.
3. You must produce a product.
4. You will write a proposal & pitch it to the class, including:
   * 1. Purpose
     2. Audience
     3. Timeline (you have a final presentation date and check-in dates, so how are you going to plan out your approach? Let’s talk Backward Designing a bit…)
     4. Resources
   1. Answer questions such as:
      1. What is your project?
      2. Who will work with you on this project? Who will your mentor be?
      3. Who is the audience/user base/client base for this project?
      4. Why is this project worthwhile?
      5. What do you expect to learn from this project?
      6. What PRODUCT will you have to show at the end of the year?
      7. What sort of expenses will be involved in your project and how will you cover them?
      8. What sort of equipment will you need and where will you get it?
      9. What is your timeline for completing (or launching) your project?
5. Find an adult mentor to assist you.
   1. I love lots of different subjects, but I don’t have the time or ability to mentor all of you on different subjects. Find someone who is interested in the area that you are dealing with and consult them as necessary.
6. Reflect each week on the class blog
   1. We will be using Kidblog. We’ll see how that goes. <http://kidblog.org/MrsHardensClass-5/>
7. You will conference with me as much (or as little as you want). However, I will definitely check in with you at least twice over the course of the year to see how things are going.
   1. If you are struggling in any way shape or fashion…TALK TO ME!
8. At the end of the year, you will present your product to the class in a 3-5 minute presentation with visuals.
   1. See TED-talks for examples of presentation style
9. You might fail. In that case, your presentation will probably consist of what you learned from this year-long adventure.

**Grades**

Your final product itself will not be graded. Here’s what *will* be graded:

1. Proposal/pitch
   1. On-time
   2. Addresses required questions appropriately
2. Blog reflections/updates
   1. Required length (150+ words)
   2. Address topic
   3. Post regularly
3. Productivity
   1. Spending 20% time actively and passionately working on project
4. Presentation
   1. Final presentation meets all of the requirements
      1. 3-5 minutes
      2. Audience awareness
      3. Discussion of all elements of project/product and/or discussion of things learned from failure