GH - Genius Hour

Taking a passion projects approach to curriculum

Format: Online

Course duration: 20 hours

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About the Course

Genius Hour was rapturously received by teachers last summer, all agreeing that the process is nothing short of pure genius! This year, we bring you a selection of wonderful case studies from

They have written about their experiences, logged their journeys, taken photographs at key moments and rolled the video cameras, and we bring you this fully immersive experience this summer, to inspire your own Genius Hour adventures in the coming year.

In summary, children from second to sixth class delve into an area of passionate interest and work on an enquiry question around that topic during Genius Hour. They research it, create something and finally present and showcase their learning to peers, in any of 101 different ways at the end of the project. An amazing process, with tremendous learning outputs and beloved of children and teachers everywhere. Go on - be the GENIUS that brings Genius Hour to your school in the coming year.

In 'Genius Hour', children work on their own passion projects for one hour in the week, usually on Friday, and for a number of consecutive weeks, until completed. In this course you will discover how to help children discover their passionate interests, each then turning that interest and curiosity into a project to be researched, produced and showcased.

In Genius Hour the children identify and choose a passionate interest, and do three things:

1. Research something that is of interest to him/her
2. Create Something
3. Present & Share it
4. Each student works on his / her own personal project

Overview of Genius Hour from educational author and publisher Chris Kesler

Here are 11 examples where pupil passionate interests became the basis of their Genius Hour projects, chosen from the endless possibilities that can constitute any Genius Hour project:

1. I'm interested in ancient History. I'm wondering how were the great pyramids constructed? ..... becomes passion project: researching and constructing a model of a pyramid.
2. I'm interested in games that children play. I wonder what did our grannies and grandads do without screens for entertainment? ..... becomes passion project: create a booklet of games and pastimes of bygone days.
3. I'm curious about everything to do with the natural world. I wonder what are the main causes of global warming and can I do anything about it? ..... becomes passion project: research and create a PowerPoint illustrating cause and effect of global warming.
4. I love Irish music. I wonder can I play a tune on the Tin whistle? ..... becomes passion project: learning to play incrementally more difficult tunes on the tin whistle using an online tutor.
5. Computer games really interest me. I wonder how are computer games created? ..... becomes passion project: research how games are created and programme own game using SCRATCH Programming or similar interface.
6. I hate the way our area looks sometimes. I wonder what could be done to improve our local area? ..... becomes passion project: create a questionnaire and survey people, present the ideas and the results in a visual display.
7. The world would cease if we killed off all the bees and insects. I wonder where do insects, bugs and little critters like to live? ..... becomes passion project: research and design/make little critter hotels and see who checks in.

8. I collect board games because they fascinate me. I wonder what makes a great board game and could I create a good one? ..... becomes passion project: research evolution board games through the years, their designs and common features, and then make own.

9. I love comedy. I wonder if my two friends and I could write and record a short comedy sketch? ..... becomes passion project: watch and review some comedy and then write and film our own sketch.

10. Art and design is what I like to do when free. I wonder if I could design a range of occasional cards, 'as Gaeilge for Ireland? .... becomes passion project: research, design and create own range of occasion cards……. and perhaps stock and sell locally.

11. I love watching tricks being performed on YouTube. I wonder could I be a magician? .... becomes passion project: research and learn a bunch of tricks and put on a show for your class!

…………………Genius Hour is all about taking an item of personal interest and generating a wondering question, which is then turned into a passion project involving research & output of a product, which is then showcased and presented at the end of the suite of Genius Hours.

The course will detail and develop every step of the Genius Hour process, from helping children identify their real interests, to generating an enquiry question and working the learning from researching up into a finished product output, which is shared and showcased in an end of project presentation to his / her class.

Genius Hour encompasses an amazing stepped-through process, with tremendous learning outputs and is beloved of children everywhere. You won't be able to stop them learning!

Will you be the one that brings Genius Hour back to your school in September 2024? Enrol today and prepare to discover a whole new way of doing learning!

NOTE:

The online format of this course enables you to study at a time and place that best suits your own needs.

You can access your course from July 1st to August 22nd 2025.

Within this highly interactive web-based course, a dynamic learning experience awaits, where you can interact with your fellow course participants through the in-course chat forums and communication tools provided by the CPD College learning system.

Our friendly and knowledgeable tutors actively support each course, providing expert interaction, guidance and feedback for all participants on chat questions and assignments which call for critical reflection, self-analysis and a reasoned response.

On successful completion of your course, you can download and print off your CPD record and certificate of completion.

We look forward to welcoming you to your course.

Learning outcomes

This course aims to:

- Introduce teachers to the philosophy and pedagogy that underpins the Genius Hour movement and approach to education
- Detail the sequence of steps to running a successful Genius Hour learning project
- Showcase the Genius Hour processes, projects and learning across a suite of commissioned IRISH case studies, enabling teachers to extrapolate pointers for own practice and the inspiration to get involved
- Train teachers to use Google Documents as a way of managing work flows & diverse projects in a personalised education classroom setting
- Outline the value of an enquiry driven / personalised approach to learning
- Skill teachers in helping children to identify high interest learning topics and to guide them from initial idea, to research question, to product creation and presentation of learning, highlighting opportunities to incorporate STEM where possible / applicable
- Summarise the wealth of 21st century skills that are central to and developed in Genius Hour work
- Establish reflection in and on learning as a key component of the learning process
- Propose ways for children to showcase learning e.g. set up class YouTube channel
- Look at, review and score one's own 'Teacher Practice in Literacy' as part of the SSE process.

Modules

01 - We introduce teachers to the concept of Genius Hour, a new worldwide movement in primary education that really does afford children a chance to learn about things that passionately interest them. We set out the pedagogy, philosophy and principles that underpin and drive not just the uniqueness, but the effectiveness of the Genius Hour learning approach and the suite of 21st Century personal and literacy skills

that are developed within this child centred / engaging approach. Case studies from Irish schools included.

02 - When teachers identify, know and use children's passionate interests around which to organise learning activities, then they can use these to drive intrinsically motivated, meaningful and authentic learning, building skills in the process. At the heart of Genius Hour is individualised learning, driven by an enquiry question that propels children in learning as they seek answers to their own questions. Case studies from Irish schools included.

03 - Teachers facilitate and enable real authentic enquiry learning by the pupils, where they follow a defined process, for at least one hour+ per week, where the process is discretely scheduled into the curriculum. Within the process the children utilise, refine, build up and cement a suite of literacy skills from researching, comprehending, summarising and recording; to creating outputs of learning, to reflecting, journaling and blogging on that learning. Case studies from Irish schools included.

04 - Central to Genius Hour is the production of outputs that evidences and showcases learning, and there are many ways to do it; from posters and poetry to digital video and Powtoons, from audio reflections and raps to PowerPoints and oral

presentations. In both the process and the product lie countless skill building opportunities for the child, all overseen and facilitated by the helpful teacher who is on hand with advice, resources and feedback. Case studies from Irish schools included.

05 - In this module we look at the skills children need to acquire in order to make an effective engaging presentation. The presentation will be centred on their Genius Hour learning and the resulting product. Teachers will acquire ideas for showcasing children's learning, from Genius Hour fairs to school website segments and reflective learning blogs. Genius Hour is a remarkable format for learning and once challenges are recognised, everything can be anticipated and planned for in order to drive its success in the classroom. Case studies from Irish schools included.

"The course made me realise that by facilitating something like Genius Hour for a class that I am enabling personalised learning for every child in that class. I am helping them to become independent learners, problems solvers and innovators as they express their creative side through the process." Shane, 2023