



WHAT IS AN IDEAS PROJECT?

Learning is fun. This handbook will guide you through a simple process to help you learn about anything you want. There are five steps based on the acronym IDEAS. Using this process, you imagine possibilities & identify a topic, develop a learning plan & questions, explore answers & connections, announce to an audience, and self-reflect & evaluate.

I believe learning is based on three key components: play, practice and purpose. Keeping these in mind can enhance your learning process. Play initiates learning and provides energy. Play in this case is more spirit and energy than an activity. Approaching an IDEAS project with a spirit of playfulness helps you learn. As you work through the project, much of what you will be doing and learning will be new. By practicing new skills and ways of thinking you will become a better learner. It's helpful to remember failure and mistakes are part of practice. You can use the epic fail worksheet on page 34 to record and celebrate your mistakes. There aren't correct ways to learn. You need to create this practice using the steps provided and your own ideas and experience. This is where purpose is important. It's helpful to think about why you are doing an IDEAS project. Maybe you have an upcoming trip and want to learn about what to do or where to go. Perhaps you have a desire to grow your own food, but you don't know how. Or maybe you just want to have fun learning about something interesting to you. Whatever your reason for wanting to learn something, IDEAS can guide you through the process.

Use the project guide to keep track of what you are doing and learning. Work through each step of the IDEAS process using the provided guides and worksheets. The scaffold section at the end includes extra supports to help with different needs.

I hope you enjoy IDEAS! I would love to hear about your project. Share it with me at

drcherylpeterson.com





DASH

GETTING STARTED

After doing an IDEAS project, most students tell me they wish they had a better idea of the whole process before they started. I think part of the fun of doing an IDEAS project is the learning that happens along the way. There might be things you would have done differently, but that is part of the learning process. But, if you really want a quick way to get a sense of what an IDEAS project is like, you can do a DASH. A DASH is meant to be done quickly, usually in a class period or an hour or less. It can be done with any topic and it's great for teachers to use with something they want you to learn about anyway. The worksheets will guide you through each step of DASH. Here is a quick description of each step:


- Develop a learning plan and questions – Find some information about your topic. Think about what your class or other audience needs to know about the topic. Gather as much information as you can in about 15–20 minutes. Use the worksheet to record things you learn.
- Announce to an audience – Prepare an infographic or public service announcement to share the key things you learned with your class or other audience. This is a quick project and more of a sloppy copy than perfected work. Just focus on getting the key ideas communicated in a creative way.
- Self-reflect – Think about what you learned from this process. What was challenging? What was exciting? What did you learn about yourself as a learner? What did you learn about the topic?
- Highlight – Think about the process and key ideas that might help you when you do a full IDEAS project. Highlight things you want to remember to do or think about.






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DEVELOP A LEARNING PLAN




QUESTIONS




KEY INFORMATION

Topic:



IDEAS & THOUGHTS



EXTRA STUFF



--- DASH ---

ANNOUNCE TO AN AUDIENCE

Think about what you just learned about your topic. What does your class or maybe even the world, need to know about it. Use this space to create an infographic or write a public announcement to share the key things you learned. Have fun with it and make it creative.





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SELF-REFLECT

One of the key parts of learning is reflecting on what you have learned. It is important to think about the project but also about yourself and the process. Ask yourself - What did you learn about the topic? What did you learn about how you learn? What would you do differently next time? How will you improve the next time you learn? What did you enjoy learning or doing? Use this space to self-reflect. This is what I learned about:

- my IDEAS...

- myself...

- the process...





DASH

HIGHLIGHT

List key things you learned from doing a DASH that might help you do an IDEAS project.

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