# INTRODUCTION

The Pareto Project is an evolved form of project-based learning that was inspired by 20 Time and Genius Hour. It gives students an opportunity to design and implement a meaningful, personal project that spans a twelve-week period, with about 20% of the time that would otherwise be dedicated to ELA work instead dedicated to a Pareto Project.

THE 80-20 RULE
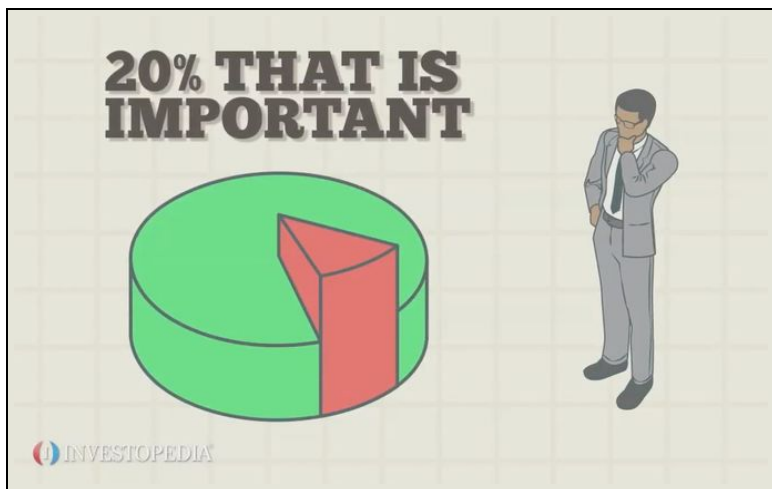
The site Better Explained offers a crash course in the Pareto principle, which is also known as the 80-20 rule. It isn't exactly a rule, however; it is an observation that "most things in life (effort, reward, output) are not distributed evenly — some contribute more than others."

Click the link above or the image to the left to load Better Explained. The image itself is taken from an article on the Pareto principle at Ivestopedia.

For this project, you are going to bring one of your passions to the forefront of your academic work. You will dedicate only 20% of your Sisyphean High time to this project, but it will produce a considerable amount of evidence of your growth and learning — if not 80% exactly, certainly enough to make this among the most meaningful activities of the year.

One of your first steps will be to plan out the time you will dedicate to this project. That plan will shift as you begin the work, but you will retain a significant degree of control over how you spend your time in and out of class. Your choices must be deliberate and productive. To help, you should review the concept of interstitial learning by reading through this Medium essay:

Click the image or this link to load the essay, which explains interstitial learning.

Head Training: The 36th Chamber
Bring the (pedagogical) ruckus

Mr. Eure
Jan 25

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

*This project will be folded into our quarterly GAP process. As always, three other facets matter as much as the objective quality of the work itself: **growth**, **collaboration**, and **self-monitoring**, especially through metacognitive and reflective conversation and writing. The essential skills and traits of grade abatement have been updated and compressed below.*

Collegiality ⇆ Empathy | The crux of the course and the stuff of growth, especially in a collaborative learning environment. Empathy is a skill built through discussion, writing, and reading in the Humanities.

Integrity + Character | The focus on individual learning environments and experiences, especially the honesty and openness necessary to take risks. Character is built through the skills and traits below.

External Artifacts

Close Reading ⇒ Internalization| Encompasses the texts analyzed for emulative purposes, the universal languages and structures memorized, and the literature read for empathy.

Critical Thinking ⇒ Metacognition| The problems being solved, the meaning being made, and, most importantly, the thinking that drives every iterative or individual choice.

Effective Communication ⇒ Writing | Employs bishop composition to centralize writing, especially essay writing, among other discussions and communications.

Internal Artifacts

Amenability ⇆ Self-Awareness | Requires an awareness and acceptance of critical and constructive feedback from all stakeholders in the atelier environment. Especially focused on radial discussion, proxy feedback, and metacognitive analysis.

Assiduousness ⇆ Self-Efficacy | How to live like an academic tardigrade: testing limits, adapting to challenges, and embracing failure as a necessary step in learning. Builds the muscles to beat down procrastination, impulsivity, and complacency.

Organization ⇒ Autodidacticism | The systemic, systematic, and individualized approach to getting things done. The "secret" skill that frames the rest and enables self-directed learning.
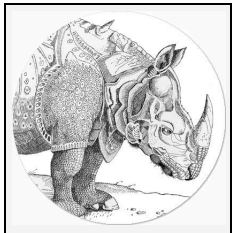
Click the image or [this link](#) to load Mind the GAP, *an essay published on November 28 that contains the most recent profiles, tiers, and protocols used in the grade abatement process. For those in a hurry, here is a direct link to the profiles:*

- *Grade Abatement Profiles*
- *Grade Abatement Profiles: Tiered Application*

PROJECT STEPS

The following five steps must happen in sequence. While student choice is paramount, we still need to build toward those choices, just like we do in the rest of our learning.

STEP #1: TIME

Each Pareto Project will take place over a 12-week arc. The first arc this year ends on March 10; the second, on June 9. A separate calendar will help you track end-of-project dates, end-of-quarter dates, and even days off:
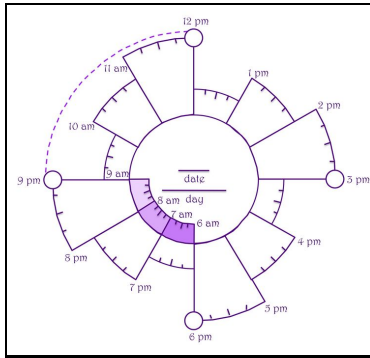
Click the image or this link to load the calendar, which will also be photocopied and posted in class.

Note that any changes made to this calendar will be reflected only online. No additional photocopies will be made.

Your first step is to take stock of the time you have available during those 12-week periods. This is an inventory of study halls, Saturday mornings, homework, sports practice, etc — all the responsibilities (and irresponsibilities) that consume your time. You must be organized to get the most out of this Pareto Project, and not just because organization is the skill that frames the rest. Whether you use a chronodex or a daily planner, the only way you'll accomplish the goals you set for this project is if you make time for them. You must also choose a project that *fits* your schedule; if you must limit your focus during Round 1, you'll have a chance to be more ambitious when we start Round 2 in mid-March.

Remember, too, that this project will comprise only **20%** or so of the overall work expected of you. You need a separate inventory of your other ELA assignments and activities:

Click on the appropriate image to load the academic update for that course.

STEP #2: IDEA SMITHING

First, recognize that you do not have the freedom to do *anything* you want for this project. Total freedom is paralyzing. You need the parameters of this guide and the limitations of your individual schedule to focus you, and you should always look to the intrinsic focus of grade abatement and our classroom structure.

What you really need is *inspiration*. That, too, will focus you. Fortunately, inspiration can be manufactured, often through a careful study of what others have done before. That's one of the benefits of Google: It gives us access to other iterations of 20 Time or Genius Hour projects. 20time.org, for instance, has a collection of student projects of all kinds.

That same site, from which we will borrow several structures, proposes a "bad idea factory," which you are welcome to do on your own. Much more useful is a workshop or *atelier* approach: Small groups hammer out project ideas under teacher supervision, then use that refined understanding to help others in class and online. Read this to help you:

Click the image or this link to load an essay on radial and proxy feedback.

A Better Form of Feedback
Using workshops to work better

Mr. Eure
just now
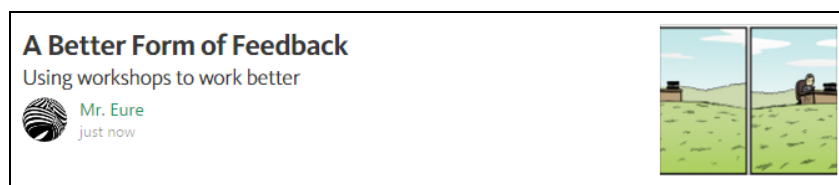
Your goal in Step #2 is to find an idea that inspires you. It needs to sustain twelve weeks of intermittent work. The projects built on your idea can be individual or collaborative, but the idea starts with you, the individual learner, figuring out what you *want* to do.

The idea must also be actionable and clear. You must be able to pitch it in 60 seconds. This "elevator pitch" protocol is taken from 20time.org: *You find yourself in an elevator with the one person who has the power to make your project a reality. You have the time it takes to get to the top floor to sell her on your idea. Do it.*

Since we don't have easy access to an elevator, we'll use our Google+ Communities to pitch ideas to each other. A category has been created for each group solely for Pareto Project discussion. This also gives interested folks — parents, administrators, other teachers — the ability to see your ideas as they develop.

Hyperlinks willing, these should take you directly to the stream for Pareto Projects:
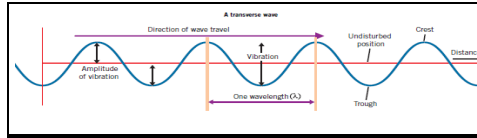

Click on the appropriate image to load the Google+ Community for that course.

STEP #3: BLUEPRINT

As you finish Step #2, convert your idea into a sentence of no more than 121 characters, and then add it to this year's Google Form:

Pareto Project Pitches
(Google Form)

When every idea is uploaded,
click here for the entire list.

Next up is a formal blueprint adapted from the template shared by Kevin Brookhouser at 20time.org. Use a copy of the following Google Doc for your proposal:
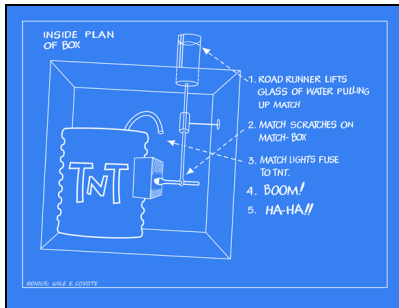
Click the image or this link to load the blueprint template. Then make a copy (File→Make a copy) that you can edit. Follow the bracketed directions, replacing that text with your own.

Through this blueprint submission, you will set a 12-week goal, predict where you'll be by certain dates, and account for some of the resources you'll need over that time. This will be reviewed and refined *atelier* style, through radial and proxy feedback, over a series of interstitial discussions.

As part of this collaborative process, share your blueprint with your peers on Google+ or through Google Drive. Print a copy and bring it to class, too, where it can be shared in small groups. As you read each other's proposals, look for clear and actionable ideas, and then offer constructive criticism. Remember that this is about the process; the presentation doesn't matter (yet).