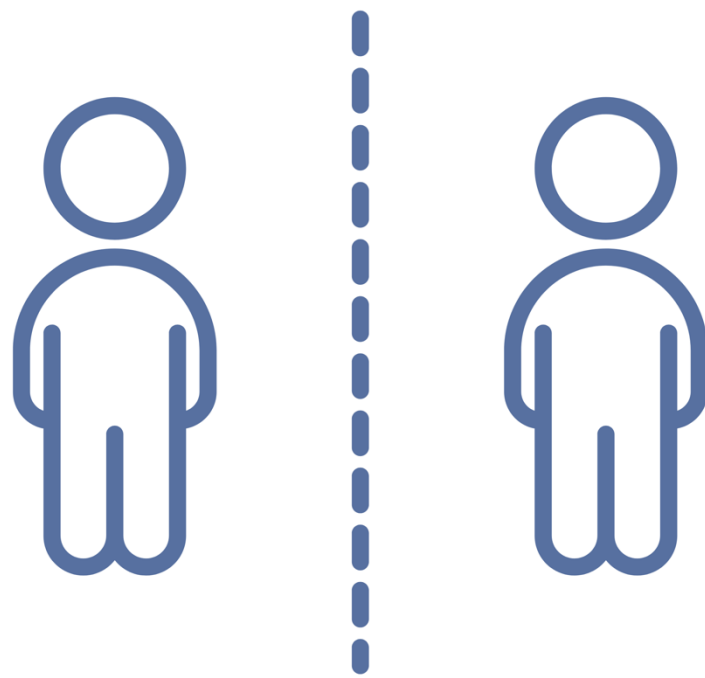


53 Hacks for the
S O C I A L L Y
D I S T A N C E D
CLASSROOM



Ideas for authentic,
student-owned, collaborative,
active and integrated learning



Welcome!

Undoubtedly, the Covid-19 crisis has disrupted education in profound ways. School closures have forced teachers, students, leaders and parents into a steep learning curve to find new methods of teaching and learning with little or no preparation. As the world moves past the shut-down, we face yet another and perhaps more daunting task: how to reopen schools.

The countries that have reopened first have provided some understanding about what this looks like and what is likely to occur elsewhere in the near future. Countries like China, Denmark, Germany and Norway have enforced strict guidelines to control the spread of Covid-19 as students move back into physical school buildings.

These guidelines include:

- Classes are kept at a maximum of 15 students
- Students remain with one adult for the whole day
- Student desks must be spaced 2 meters
- Students do not switch classes
- Handwashing every two hours
- Classes should be outside whenever possible

Covid-19 presents a clear need for students to be limited in their physical interactions with other students and adults in school. Unfortunately, this need also is in direct conflict with many of the values of student-driving learning. The lively and active classroom that buzzes with student freedom, collaboration and the messiness of *real* learning seems difficult to visualize given the new guidelines.

As a response to this, we've put together **53 Hacks for the Socially Distanced Classroom**. Our hope is that learning can still represent the values of Project-Based Learning. Learning can still be authentic, student-owned, collaborative, active and integrated.

The ideas in this guide range from very simple things that take (literally!) one minute to implement to complex projects that require multiple weeks. *This guide is designed to give inspiration and spark new ideas in a situation that can easily be overwhelmed with limitations.*

You are welcome to use, share, adapt and change the ideas in this guide to fit the needs of your classroom and your students.

At some point, we hope all schools will use the disruption of Covid-19 as an opportunity to reimagine what school could be... there is no better time than now.

Together with passion, projects and purpose,

Loni Bergqvist
Founder, *Imagine If*
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Authentic Learning Hacks

How can we connect learning to authentic audiences and the world outside school?

Maker-Space Design

Have students design their own Makers-Space (their desk area) by exploring:

- What do they need in space? Why?
- What could it look like? (create a blueprint drawing)
- Gather materials
- Create/build spaces
- They could also design these spaces for each other 😊

The Impact of Covid19

Students explore how Covid-19 is affecting their local community and what they could do to help others (Explore fitness channels, positive psychology, data collection, research, persuasive writing/speaking skills).

School-Wide Newscast

School collaborates together to produce a weekly news broadcast

- Online editorial meetings on Monday (create jobs: reporters, researchers, photographers, editors)
- Different sections: sports, news, culture, etc.
- Friday the show is broadcasted, premiering at the same time in all rooms (with popcorn, Cinema style!)
- It can also be livestreamed to parents
- Each class could be in charge of a different program or theme
- Editorial board could be representatives from each class

Maker-Kit Design

Students use the [Design Process](#) to create a “makers kit” for with necessary supplies to have at their desks for hands-on and creative tasks.

Classroom Design Challenge

Students design solutions to make their learning environment under Covid-19 better given the restrictions and guidelines for safety.

Expert Chats

Video conference with an expert (Example: author, engineer, musician).

Tap Student Experiences

Make KWL Charts with a topic (What do I KNOW, what do I WANT to know, what have I LEARNED?)

Create Joy for Others

Connect with the local nursing home

- Make pictures, cards or messages that can be delivered
- Set up an appointment and sing outside the open windows to residents

Connect with Family

Record students reading books and send them to grandparents or others who are isolated due to Covid-19. Students can also [send a hug](#).

My Covid-19 Experience

Create a time-capsule or write a journey of your experience during the Covid-19 shut down. Include photos, news articles and anything relevant to share with someone in the future.

Student-Owned Learning Hacks

How do we support student passions and interests?

Genus Hour

Designate time each week/day for students to explore something that's interesting to them. It can be school or non-school related. At the end of the week, students need to present what they've explored.

Take A (Virtual) Trip

Choose a place and take a virtual field trip with [Discovery Education](#) or [CYARK](#).

Grow-Show

Over a period of 30-days, students choose and learn a new skill. At the end of the period, they present what they've learned by explaining this process: Choose skill, find materials/resources, practice, fail, practice again, reflect, demonstrate and celebrate!

Passion Project

Students plan and work through their own project. You can find a template [here](#).

(Virtual) Career Fair

- Make a list of professions the students are interested in
- Invite these professionals to a video call
- Ask questions and learn about each career

Puppet Stories

Write and create your own puppet show.

- Read stories together and discuss the parts of a story
- Write a quick puppet show as a class, discussing what a script is
- Brainstorm ideas for the story
- Write the story
- Create puppets
- Practice
- Perform puppet shows for younger students

Design A Mask Challenge

- Research what makes a good mask to reduce the risk of Covid-19
- Make a mask that represents (and protects) you

Design The Most Awesome School Challenge

- Where would it be? Who would be the teachers? What classes would be offered? How would they be taught? Send your ideas to the school principal.

Future Me Exploration

Create a portfolio (digital or paper) with important information for when you are 30 years old

- Choose a career, develop questions and research
- Design and draw a blueprint for your future home (Where would it be? What would it look like?)
- Create the home in Minecraft and give us a tour
- Create a budget for when you're 30 (what will you spend money on? How much money will you need?)

Collaborative Learning Hacks

How can we support students in working with and learning from each other?

Virtual Exhibition

Design, create and hold a virtual exhibition of student work on [Artsteps](#).

International Collaboration

Join a session of "[Linking Online Learners \(LOL\)](#)" where students from all over the world meet on a video call to discuss a theme and share experiences.

Book Projects

Students create individual pages or parts to a larger book

- Class cookbook
- A-Z book about a topic (each student has 1 letter and must do text and drawing)
- Publish book online or in print

Class Discussion

Have a [Socratic Seminar](#) discussion about a text or topic.

Class Pen-Pals

Students have a shared notebook with students in another class. They write letters to each other and exchange the notebooks each day.

Class Newspaper

- Weekly class newspaper produced by students
- Students write different sections: opinion, photography, sports, culture, reviews
- Can be printed and distributed to other classes and parents

Debate

Hold weekly debates with another class about controversial topics.

Laugh

Students write original jokes and spend time each day sharing them with the class.

Count-Down Chain

- Students choose something they're excited about and looking forward to
- Students share these ideas with the class
- Students create a paper-chain and each day remove one chain-link to count down

Virtual collaboration

- Write joint stories in a shared document
- Make music videos via video conferencing
- Create "duets" on [TikTok](#)

Book Club

Students read different books and video chat with students in the class next door.

Gaming

Play video games with kids in another classroom.

Cross-School Collaboration

Link with another school and pair students up to shadow a student virtually to learn about their day. The student then creates an innovation for the other student that could improve their experience.

Active Learning Hacks

How can we make learning hands-on and active?

Community Stones

Go outside, collect and wash stones. Paint the stones and leave them in the community to spread art and joy!

Make Shadow Art

[Trace shadows](#) on the ground.

Sensory Stories

- Go outside and sit
- Make some notes about what all of your senses are experiencing: sight, smell, sound, touch, taste
- Write a story or poem about being outside that incorporates all of these senses

Community Clean-Up

Go on a trash hunt and pick up litter and garbage in the local area.

Bird Exploration

- Draw birds you see
- Research what kind they are and some facts and make a short film

Sidewalk Poetry

Write Haiku poems. Write them with chalk outside on the sidewalk.

Geocaching

Go [Geocaching](#)

Community Treasure Hunt

- Make a "treasure" and hide it in the community around the school
- Create maps and a series of clues so others can find the treasure
- Have a treasure-hunt day where students exchange maps hunt for treasure
- BONUS: Dress as pirates.

Hands-On LEGO Activities

Try these simple and fun activities using only [6 LEGO bricks](#).

Chain Reaction

Build a Rube Goldberg like this one from [Exploratorium](#).

Toothpick Bridges

- Build a toothpick bridge (with toothpicks and white glue)
- See who can make it the strongest, longest, leanest... test them
- Reflect on science concepts and try to build them again

DANCE!

Each week create a "Class Dance"

- Every hour hold a Dance Minute where a song comes on and everyone dances
- Each week can have a different theme/song, costume, prop and lighting effect

Sing Karaoke

- Hook up a computer to a projector and search for any song followed by "karaoke version." Students can sing together from the comfort of their desks.

Integrated Learning Hacks

How can we connect learning to multiple subjects and create with technology?

Theme Day

- Choose a theme for each day (Dinosaurs, cats, kindness, love, family,)
- Start the day with a LEGO building challenge (Can you build something that shows ___)
- Read a book about the theme
- Do a math problem about the theme
- Sing a song about the theme, then make up your own!
- Learn the word for the theme in 5 different languages
- Spell, write and color the words of the theme
- Brainstorm 50 questions as a class about the theme
- Students choose their own questions and research on the internet and share answers
- Do an art piece on the theme (drawing, painting, sculpture, photoshop)
- Interview parents about the theme for homework, share answers the next morning

Coding and Creation

Learn simple coding and create animations with [Scratch and Scratch Jr.](#)

AR

Use [Google's AR objects](#) to bring animals, planets and other cool things to life! (Smart phones needed).

Human Art Museum

- Research historical paintings
- Create costumes and [recreate them!](#)
- Students write a short description of the painting, what it means and a biography of the artist
- Compile the photos in a book
- Print them and hang them in the school hallway along with the texts

Blackout Poetry

- Students identify a text from a physical paper, note, newspaper
- Craft a poem by blocking out sections of the original text
- Use photos, magazines, to create a new collage of the poem

Haunted History Stories

- Choose and learn about an event or period in history
- Re-write the story as a haunted tale, include some actual facts and add your own twists!
- Make a cover drawing for your story that is really scary
- Compile stories into a class book

Design a board game

- What is the objective? Rules?
- Create the board and pieces
- Play at an appropriate distance
- BONUS: Design for only one player
- BONUS: Design so it can be played over video conferencing

Emoji Stories

- Write a short story
- "Translate" the short story into emojis
- Swap stories with someone else and try to write it again

53 Hacks for the Socially Distanced Classroom

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For more information and ideas on using Project-Based Learning, please visit www.imagineif.dk or connect with us at info@imagineif.dk.