The MYP Personal Project
At Lincoln Park High School

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What we thought would help us with the daunting task of managing 600 projects:

▶ We have had the Diploma Program since 1980, and over 1/3 of our teachers have experience with EE supervision.

▶ This experience would help staff understand MYP Personal Project supervision responsibilities

▶ Some students had been open to completing long term research papers outside of class (EE). We could just extend this to all.

▶ Students would be receptive since they had more choice in topic than they did for EE. An interesting topic would intrinsically motivate them

▶ We thought we could model our coordination of PP using our EE model

Oh, how we were wrong!

We soon realized we needed to develop our own model of how to organize this extremely large scale project (this year close to 600 sophomores), that was perceived by students and staff to be very different from EE

Now we would like to share how we got to where we are today. After two years of trial and error and ongoing reflection, here are some things we've learned thus far . . .

Lincoln Park High School's MYP Personal Project
Year 1: The Pilot Year

Year 1: The Personal Project Pilot Year

- ▶ Mr. Boraz, our principal, released Grace for 1 class to help with PP

- ▶ We asked the IB if we could pilot the PP with a cohort of students during implementation

- ▶ We chose our Honors English students, our "lowest level" students as our pilot group. This group included about 100 students including our diverse learners.

- ▶ In this pilot year, the project would be organized through Honors English classes.

Year 1 continued:

- ▶ Students received a very detailed PP Guidebook with explicit journal prompts, and written report guidance

- ▶ Incorporated in the book were also directions for supervisor and student meetings and meeting sign off sheets.

- ▶ All freshmen English classes visited the Fair and students were required to answer questions about the projects (handout)

Class of 2018 Personal Project Topic Ideas

The following is a list of topics I compiled from the handout you completed when you visited this year's Personal Project Fair. These are just some initial ideas. Feel free to come up with others!

Baseball and injury prevention in sports	How to make toys	Technology and its effect in different parts of the world
Turtles	Phone case designs	Helping victims of bullying
TV show music	Creating outfits/fashion	Child care
Dessert cookbook	Medicine	Building a robot
Video game development	Father's Japanese roots	Making cosmetics
College??	Scoliosis	Designing shoes
Jazz history	Biology experiment	How to start a business
Fashion	Social health	Orchestra
Photography—the evolution of it	Family tree	Violins
Film-making	Math and how it connects to life	Swimming suits and caps and speed
Gang violence	Adjusting to cultures because I move often	Process of writing a script
Build an app	Longboarding	Overcoming stage fright
Choir	Sports performance and shoes	Painting
Bullying	Invent gear to help sport teams	Mixing songs
Racial profiling	Golf	Performing in a video
Live performances—concerts	Improving sports endurance	Bullying and how it's a bigger deal than many think
Poetry	Soccer	Defining yourself
Cars and how they have changed over the years	Cheerleading and building my self esteem	The science of golf
Fashion photography	Volleyball	Fishing
How to overcome fears	Nature in parks	Making the fastest car
How to become more social	Cookbooks	Hockey
Computer animation video	Being a Latino American	Baseball
Film making, art, and scripting to make a film	Gymnastics	Inspirational art or music
How to learn about past from video games	Football	Building computer
	Traveling	Astrology
Animation	Planning a party	Graphic design
	Dance choreography	Aerodynamic cars
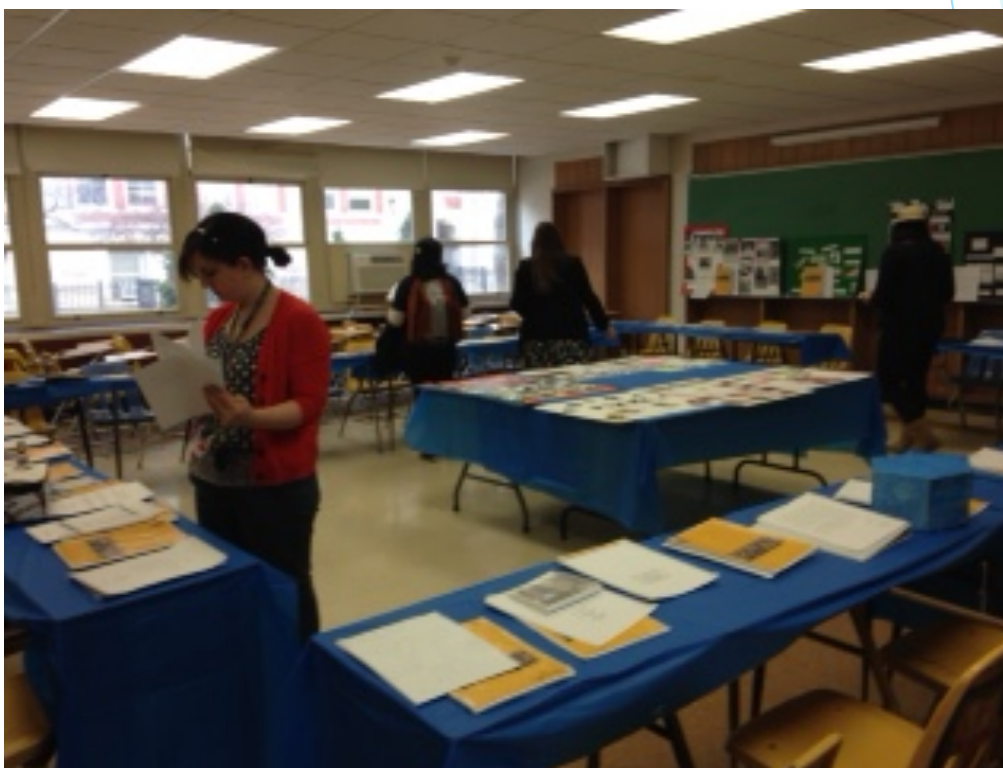
Year 1 after the Fair:

▶ We worked with our targeted group of 12 students during their lunch periods

▶ We visited all 9th grade English classes and introduced the Personal Project to them

▶ We gave all 9th graders a "summer Personal Project" assignment which included choosing a topic, writing a goal, and initially exploring 3 resources they would use

Year 1: Reflection, What Worked/What Needed Revision

What Worked	Areas for Reflection
Using a "hub" course to organize project	How could we get subject teachers outside of this hub to feel like a part of the project?
Organized guide with journal prompts	Hard copies of book were a problem. They were misplaced by students and tedious for supervisors and English teachers to review for assignment completion. Keep prompts, eliminate hard copy books
Meeting with EE Coordinator before assigning supervisors to ensure that teacher work load was equitable	PP supervisors were primarily staff members who never supervised a project of any kind—how, when, and where can we train them?

Year 1: Reflection, What Worked/What Needed Revision

What Worked	Areas for Reflection
Meeting with teachers, usually after school to train them in PP supervision responsibilities	Meetings were optional, so not all teachers attended. How can we get greater attendance if meetings are optional?
Visiting 9th grade classes for Personal Project "kick-off"	9th grade kick-off solid idea, however, many 9th –graders didn't complete summer assignment. How can we increase completion for next year? How can the assignment be more purposeful?

Year 1: Other "Issues"

▶ Supervisors—some would not respond to students' email correspondence. We had students send emails in English class so we know they went out

▶ Some would not take project supervisory responsibilities seriously

▶ Students often asked how the project "counts" and we didn't give a grade for it in any of their classes

Year 1: Other "Issues"

▶ Our students participate in only 2 years of a 5 year program. We have well over 100 feeder schools, most of whom don't offer the MYP.

▶ What this means is students are asked to complete a project which relies heavily on their understanding of Global Contexts and an ATL skills, when they very likely may have never been introduced to these concepts by the time they are asked to start personal project.

▶ This should improve as we work more with Year 4 teachers about stressing these important components of the IB MYP in their daily lessons

Actions we took at the end of Year 1 with the intent to improve the PP in Year 2:

▶ We asked 9th grade teachers to identify students who may find PP challenging in 10th grade

▶ If a student was named by more than one 9th grade teacher, we added them to our "at-risk" list

▶ The "at risk" group received a personalized invitation to a special "working lunch"—food gets kids to show

▶ At the lunch we rolled out our 6-week plan to introduce Global Context and PP to this group—offer to drop lowest grade in core subjects as incentive

Actions we took at the end of Year 1 with the intent to improve the PP in Year 2:

▶ Ask 9th grade teachers to identify students whom they would like to supervise for PP following year.

▶ Suggested that they not only consider their "favorite" students, rather students with whom they had a good relationship or rapport.

▶ For the most part, we were able to give all 9th grade teachers who responded 6 students they knew and requested to supervise

Lincoln Park High School's MYP Personal Project

Year 2: Personal Project for All

Year 2: Authorized MYP School—
MYP, Personal Project for all, and
a very pregnant coordinator! How
can we actually make this happen?

Year 2: Personal Project for All

Before the start of the school year:

▶ Friends of Lincoln Park, our parent organization, allotted some of the proceeds from their annual fund raiser for MYP Personal project

▶ Mr. Boraz released Grace for 2 periods to help with Personal Project (number of projects multiplied by 6 from previous pilot year!)

▶ We met with EE and Reflective project coordinators to discuss an equitable distribution of projects among all staff

Year 2: MYP and Personal Project for All

Before the start of the school year (continued):

- Students were assigned supervisors.   All teachers, counselors, administrators, even principal intern, our Emoja representative, our attendance girl, a security guard supervised Personal Project

- I scheduled a day in August for a rep. from Managebac to come to Lincoln Park—I uploaded all teachers as users

Year 2: Personal Project for All

Before the start of the school year (continued):

▶ In order for Personal Project to be a success on this large of a scale, we all had to do our part; it wasn't enough for Language and literature class to be an organizing hub.

▶ So before the school year, I developed Global context and ATL activities that would be done in Individuals and Societies and Science respectively

▶ Math would be responsible for the typing of the essay—later in the process

▶ PHE would give students a day in class with chrome books for catch-up and revision (December—before break)

Year 2: Personal Project for All

Bringing the Personal Project into the MYP classrooms (we know, we know, we aren't really supposed to do this!)

Year 2: Personal Project for All

But maybe??

"Schools must ensure that the Personal Project does not form part of the curriculum for any subject group, although subjects may support the completion of the project."

(from Further guidance for MYP projects)

Year 2: Bringing the project into the classroom

Individuals and Societies: The Global Context Lesson

▶ Students explored the Global Contexts through an activity that involved viewing famous art work

▶ Students wrote a reflection at the end of the activity that prompted them to choose a Global Context for their project and explain why that was best lens through which to explore their project (turned into a journal entry in Language and literature class)

Year 2: SY 2015-2016: Bringing the project into the classroom

Sciences: The ATL Lesson

▶ Students completed and in-class assignment for which they identified strengths and weaknesses in selected ATL skills (skills we aligned with the MYP Project objectives prior to the in-class activity)

▶ Students brought this work to Language and literature the following day and wrote a reflection on Managebac.

Year 2: SY 2015-2016: Bringing the project into the classroom

Language and literature: The Organizing Hub

- ▶ Journaling time in beginning of classes on chrome books
- ▶ Distribution of project-related handouts and important announcements
- ▶ Work-habits credit for completion of components ??

Year 2: SY 2015-2016: Bringing the project into the classroom

Mathematics: The Essay

► Students access journal entries on Managebac and use them to write essay draft

► Math teachers given an organizational outline for essay

Physical and Health Education: Extra support

► Catch-up time/Revision

Students ask "How does this count?"

► We asked our programmer if he could add completion of Personal Project to student's transcript, and he is doing it for us this year (was a major motivator for many of our students)

► Students must complete all 3 parts for transcript acknowledgement (we may add a minimum of a 3 achieved in all 3 components for next year)

- The question about earning credit in a class came up frequently. Extended essay students earn a significant amount of credit in their TOK class for completion of drafts and final EE

- We are looking into counting the project for a work habits entry or some kind of something

- Many students asked about awards for best projects. This year we had the freshmen vote

Year 2: Reflection: What Worked/What Needed Revision

What Worked	Area for Reflection
Having most MYP subjects oversee important aspects of the project. Staff unified effort in students' eyes	How can we get teachers to realize the importance of this as well?
We like the activities we created to reintroduce students to GT and ATL	How/when can we train teachers to more effectively teach our lessons? I did visit classes on these days but I can make it to overlapping sections, and I'd like the teachers to help more with this—more credibility with students
Managebac was a tremendous help	How can we use more of the features Managebac offers? When and where in the world can we train a staff of 150 on computers?

Year 2: Reflection: What Worked/What Needed Revision

What Worked	Area for Reflection
Frequent visits to classes to check on/ look for students and give updates	Can we have a consistent rotation schedule for when we interrupt which classes? Share the burden
Using a system, rather than random assignment, of project supervisors	The system we used—9th grade teachers didn't really see students they selected in 10th grade. How can we fix this?
Our project fair was a success	How can we better schedule individual student presentations. When? Where?
Journal entries on Managebac	How can we give journal prompts without having such scripted? We're looking for more of a natural account of process

Plan for Year 2's Fair

- Since we are using freshmen gym, all 9th graders will visit Fair during PHE and complete an assignment that requires them to interact with the 10th grade presenters

- 10th grade Lang. & Lit teachers will bring their 10th graders to the Fair to present to PHE freshmen

Fair continued:

▶ Teachers have a flex time PD morning of the Fair, so they will be assigned to a group of 3 (based on varying IB experience using rubrics) to grade and standardize the assessment of an assigned project

▶ This activity is more practice this year, but will hopefully be done over a longer period of time (2 days all day during preps) and become the norm in the future

Ideas for next year:

► Quick start student/parent presentation for all 10th graders

► All staff presentation in the Fall

► Smaller staff group PD rotations on beginning PD days

► Parent introduction to the Personal Project in the Fall

► Managebac training for new and also confused veteran teachers

Ideas for next year:

▶ Managebac training for new and also confused veteran teachers

▶ Very detailed and explicit instruction manual for supervisors—assume nothing!

▶ Assign supervisors after Fall schedule complete—10th grade teachers get students in classes—then move onto common lunch period for other supervisors. Considerations: Interest survey for teachers extremely passionate about a topic?

▶ Utilize writing center volunteers more effectively—take advantage of assets you already have in the building!
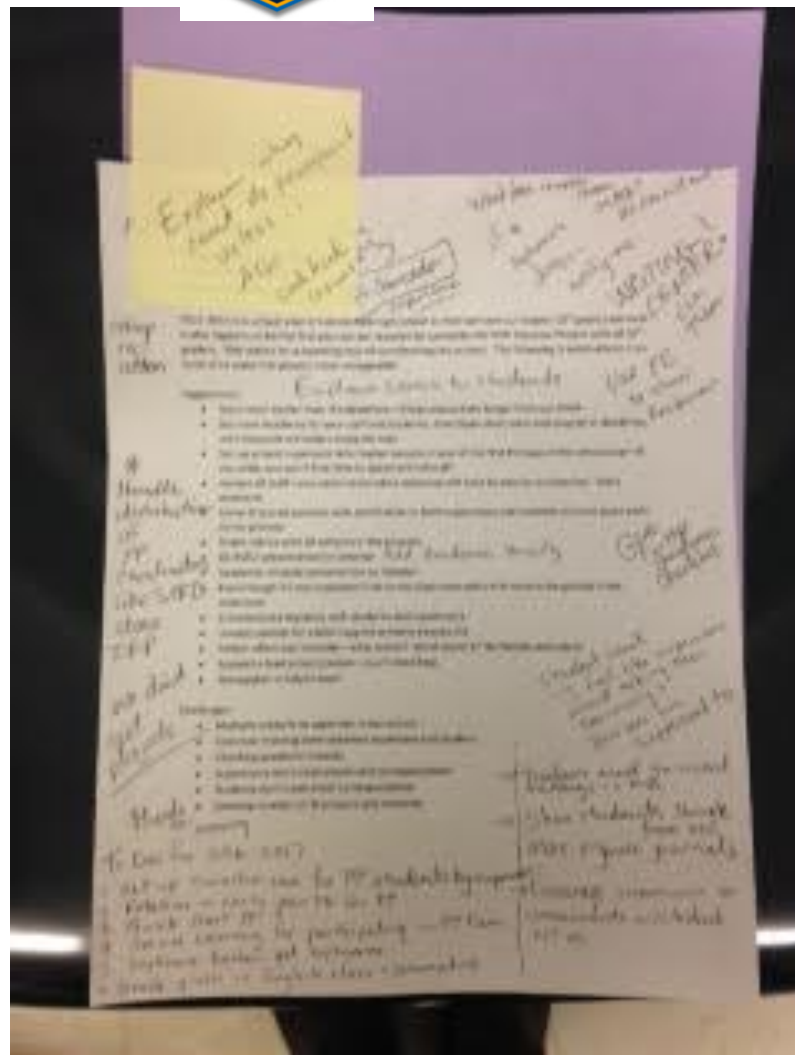
Important Take-Aways

- For a project of this magnitude to work, you need a supportive administration

- You need a project coordinator who is released from teaching

- Managebac is a life-saver for us

- You need sample projects that were done by students in your building to help spread excitement

- Tokens of appreciation for supervisors—chocolate works wonders

- This is going to take time and on-going reflection—like years and years of time! Needs to become part of the culture of the school

Yesterday was the Personal Project Fair. Today, more reflection. . .

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Thank you!

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