

# HACK LEARNING ANTHOLOGY

Innovative Solutions for  
Teachers and Leaders



**HACK**  
Learning  
SERIES

Edited by  
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**X10  
PUBLICATIONS**

## FOREWORD

THE WORD “HACKER” became a favorite part of my vocabulary when I first saw the movie *Jurassic Park*. The boy, Tim, calls Lex, his sister, a computer nerd, and she abruptly replies, “I prefer to be called a hacker.” Later, that precocious, self-proclaimed hacker provides some nifty computer coding that ultimately saves everyone from being eaten by diabolical raptors and other ravenous dinosaurs.

Even though they were fictional, her heroics made me an instant fan of Lex, the young hacker in *Jurassic Park*. You see, she didn’t steal top-secret government files or surreptitiously empty the bank accounts of hundreds of unsuspecting retirees. Rather, she saw a problem, used the assets she had at her fingertips, and concocted a solution that no one else could see. She didn’t need a committee or a five-year plan. Lex, the hacker, had all she needed—a problem, a unique skillset, and a little finesse.

Lex is one of my favorite movie characters because of her courage in the face of incredible odds and because she taught me that hackers are not the dangerous predators they’re made out to be. In fact, most hackers have the potential to be heroes.

So, when I decided to write a book about practical solutions for educators, I knew the title long before penning a single word of content. *Hacking Education: 10 Quick Fixes for Every School* was the perfect moniker for a book designed to show people how to attack

problems, much as Lex did in *Jurassic Park*. It was the perfect title for a book aimed at inspiring teachers to become hackers.

About a month into writing *Hacking Education*, I suggested a chapter on student-centered learning to my co-author Jennifer Gonzalez, who argued that the topic was too broad for a single chapter. “That might be a whole book,” Jennifer said. The more topics we bandied about, the more ideas cropped up for other books. Ultimately, *Hacking Education* became the first book in the Hack Learning Series—books that solve big problems with simple ideas.

The idea of Hack Learning is spreading rapidly and now a book series has morphed into Twitter chats, online courses, keynote speeches, TED talks, podcasts, and online study groups. Educators around the world are integrating various hacks from the books into their classrooms and schools. Hack Learning is now a movement promoting practical, simple, progressive problem-solving, using a hacker’s mentality. Lex may be merely a fictional character, but I think she would be proud.

### **THE ANTHOLOGY**

When someone tweeted about the Pineapple Chart being her favorite part of *Hacking Education*, this prompted other readers to regularly tweet their favorite hacks from other books. It struck me one day that there might be enough popular strategies in the Hack Learning Series for an anthology of favorite hacks.

Selecting favorite hacks from each book was no small task (of course, we at Times 10 Books believe every single one is wonderful); fortunately, we had plenty of help. Some were easy decisions, based on the wealth of discussion about them on various social media. The Pineapple Chart, for example, has its own Twitter hashtag and many teachers are sharing it at conferences and with colleagues at neighboring schools. Other strategies, like Vigor Versus Rigor from *Hacking the Common Core*, sparked controversy because they confront trendy words or concepts and ultimately inspire change.

In a few cases, the selection and placement of a “favorite Hack” just felt right. Opening the book with Create C.U.L.T.U.R.E from *Hacking Leadership*, for instance, seems appropriate because so much of Hack Learning is about communicating effectively with all education stakeholders. Ending the book with James Sturtevant’s heartfelt conclusion of *Hacking Engagement* is ideal because few people capture the essence and pure joy of teaching like Sturtevant does.

### **WHAT’S INSIDE?**

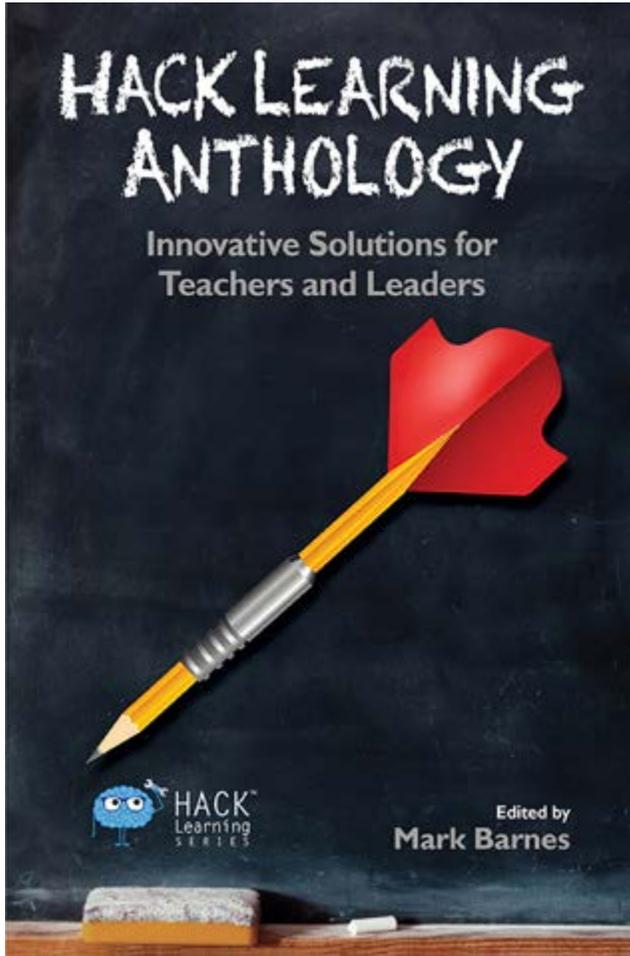
Forgive the cliché, but it is what it is . . . sort of. Hack Learning’s lead interior designer pulled the selected chapters for the anthology from his archive of previously designed Hack Learning books and inserted them into this book. Thus, each Hack in this book appears exactly as it does in its original book, so each chapter you encounter has a different look and feel than the prior chapter. This is hacky, we think, because it gives someone who has previously read a Hack Learning book a chance to see what other books look like and to try some new strategies, and the educator who has never heard of Hack Learning can take our unique problem-solving formula for a test drive, while enjoying a variety of chapter designs.

### **INNOVATION**

Granted, my opinion may be biased, but I believe Hack Learning brings the kind of innovation that is sorely lacking in education. Our students need innovative teachers and leaders, and our authors provide inventive, practical, often overlooked solutions to many big problems that make innovative teaching and learning easy. There is much more innovation coming in future books.

For now, these are, we believe, Hack Learning’s most popular Hacks. Enjoy.

—MARK BARNES, PUBLISHER OF THE HACK LEARNING SERIES



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*Hack Learning Anthology*  
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