

# Kiva School to School: Microfinance Lending Groups as Learning Communities

The screenshot shows the Kiva School to School website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Kiva Gifts, Login, Register, Do More, My Basket, and Help Center. Below this is a search bar and a 'Find Projects' section with filters for Status (Active), Project Type (All), Region (All), and Sort By (Popularity). The main content area is titled 'Your School' and features a large image of Lick-Wilmerding High School. To the right of the image, the school's name and location (San Francisco, CA, United States) are listed. Below this, there are links for 'Kiva Groups at your School' and 'Kiva Lenders at your School'. A summary box on the left indicates 2 Active Projects, 6 Projects Completed, 4 Projects Supported, and 22 Schools in your network.

## 22 Schools in Your Network

The grid displays 22 school profiles, each consisting of a small photograph and text identifying the school and its location:

- 7th Period Spanish, Bronx, NY, United States
- 4th Period Spanish, Bronx, NY, United States
- West African Secondary School, Accra, Ghana
- Bato Bangala School, Kathmandu, Nepal
- Alton Elementary, Yardley, PA, United States
- School #47, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
- Gahr High School Model UN, Camitos, CA, United States
- IFA, Delta, British Columbia, Canada
- Harvard Business School, Cambridge, MA, United States
- Joaquin Moraga I.S., Walnut Creek, CA, United States
- St. Andrews School, Asuncion, Paraguay
- El Estor Maya Quechil School, Guatemala
- Nguli Primary School, Machakos District, Kenya
- Baker Middle School, Baker City, OR, United States
- H.C. Middle School, Toronto, Canada
- Orion Junior High, Harrisville, UT, United States
- Thousand Oaks School, Berkeley, CA, United States
- Westtown Friends School, Westtown, PA, United States
- Edge High School, Sahuarita, Arizona, United States
- Saint Thomas Academy, Mendota Heights, MN, United States
- Saint Bonaventure High School, Ventura, CA, United States
- Beeper School, Birmingham, MI, United States

Masters Project Proposal Draft  
Learning, Design and Technology  
Jim Ratcliffe

**Abstract**

This project explores the potential of wiki groupware and social, collaborative environments to enable school-based groups to use microfinance lending interactions as opportunities for learning. Kiva School to School is a website that allows groups to establish individual and group learning goals, to connect with other school-based groups and individuals that share similar goals, and to leverage the expertise of the community to meet these goals. Authentic engagement with Kiva entrepreneurs in the developing world is a key part of this interaction. The website is designed to support varying levels of engagement—from discrete 10 minute activities to the planning and implementation of service-learning projects that benefit communities in which the groups are based. At any level of engagement, learning is shared—artifacts generated by group and individual activity provide content that enriches content hosted on the kiva.org website.

The learning problem that this project addresses concerns how school-based groups represent individual and group knowledge and expertise in distributed collaborative environments. How do students negotiate their relationships in social learning groups? Are individual accounts of expertise and learning goals reliable indicators of interaction? What types of metacognitive strategies best prepare students for participation in distributed, collaborative project work?

## Background

Kiva Microfunds has pioneered a new form of philanthropy commonly known as peer-to-peer microfinance. Through the Kiva website, individuals are able to loan small amounts of money to entrepreneurs in the developing world. This model relies heavily on microfinance groups- a pillar of microfinance practice. Microfinance groups pool loan capital, mutually insure each other's loans, and often function as agents of social change in their communities. The value of microfinance groups is well established. However, the emergence of *lending groups*- communities of lenders who share common beliefs, backgrounds, and social agendas is a new paradigm enabled by Kiva's interface. These groups vary greatly and include church, civic groups, business groups, associations of families and friends, informal networks of peers, and school-based groups. The emergence of group lending presents interesting opportunities for educators to explore their potential learning communities. Specifically, how can school-based groups use Kiva relationships as opportunities for learning?

The interactions between school-based groups and Kiva entrepreneurs can extend beyond economic transactions, and can be used as a platform to explore topics in world cultures and geography by developing service learning opportunities that are grounded in authentic interactions between students and Kiva entrepreneurs. This project is an experiment to explore the types of interfaces that might support new models for building learning communities among school-based groups that are part of the Kiva network.

Schools			
<p><b>Pre/Elementary Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Entrepreneurs 121 Grade 6</li> <li>■ Golden Hill 2nd Grade</li> <li>■ Mama Ayadi Salma</li> <li>■ Maria Rosa Class</li> <li>■ Mrs. Dibas Class</li> <li>■ mrshtfifthgraders</li> <li>■ purple cluster</li> <li>■ Seminole</li> <li>■ SLH Elementary School</li> <li>■ Sunny Hill Preschool</li> <li>■ Teacher Matt Class</li> <li>■ Team Fairview</li> </ul> <p><b>Middle/Jr. High Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 7 Hills Roots &amp; Shoots</li> <li>■ Baker Middle School</li> <li>■ Builder's Club</li> <li>■ Carlo &amp; Friends</li> <li>■ Covington Middle School</li> <li>■ Div. 21</li> <li>■ F.C. Reed Middle School</li> <li>■ HC Middle School</li> <li>■ Joaquin Moraga I.S</li> <li>■ Liberty Junior School</li> <li>■ Mahtomedi Middle School</li> <li>■ Monday 6th Grade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Queen A Middle School</li> <li>■ San Jose Roots &amp; Shoots</li> <li>■ Sierra Middle School</li> <li>■ South Middle(6A Cluster)</li> <li>■ TJ Middle School KF</li> <li>■ Walden Green Montessori</li> </ul> <p><b>High Schools/General</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 2nd Period Spanish Class</li> <li>■ 3B-EDITIONS (France)</li> <li>■ 4th Period Spanish Class</li> <li>■ 7th Period Spanish Class</li> <li>■ 8P, The York School, Toronto, Canada.</li> <li>■ Alma Heights</li> <li>■ Amy (and classes)</li> <li>■ Arlington H.S.</li> <li>■ Bethel Youth Group</li> <li>■ BHS Piller Advisory</li> <li>■ Bob, Donna, &amp; Bullet</li> <li>■ Brunswick World Culture Class</li> <li>■ Canisius High School</li> <li>■ CKM Club Kiva</li> <li>■ Class of 08</li> <li>■ College Prep Class</li> <li>■ Cony H.S. German Club</li> <li>■ DHS Sociology Class</li> <li>■ Eden Central Schools</li> <li>■ Edge High School M</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Eustis High School Economics</li> <li>■ Eugene Action Party</li> <li>■ Foothill Microcredit</li> <li>■ freshmen french class</li> <li>■ Friends in Marion</li> <li>■ Gahr High School MUN</li> <li>■ Gunn Pay It Forward</li> <li>■ Haley's Business Class 2, 3</li> <li>■ Holland Hall</li> <li>■ IFA</li> <li>■ Irvington High School</li> <li>■ James E. Taylor High School</li> <li>■ JDHS National Honor Society</li> <li>■ Johnston Heights Secondary School Kiva Club</li> <li>■ JRHS Tigers</li> <li>■ Keene High School</li> <li>■ Kenilworth Honor Society</li> <li>■ Kelly and her students</li> <li>■ La Vernia High School #1 #2 #3</li> <li>■ Louisville High Justice</li> <li>■ Microlumbia Fund</li> <li>■ Metuchen High School</li> <li>■ Milford High School</li> <li>■ Mr. Beesley Fan Club</li> <li>■ Mr. Young's Advisory</li> <li>■ Ms. M's Economics Class (Australia)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ms. Wright 6 Period</li> <li>■ MT Historians</li> <li>■ Newton North High School</li> <li>■ P.E.A.C.E Club</li> <li>■ pura vida</li> <li>■ Pittsburg High School</li> <li>■ Privatschule Eberhard - Trier</li> <li>■ Reynolds High School: #1 #2 #3 #4 #5</li> <li>■ Ridgefield High School</li> <li>■ Roeper School</li> <li>■ St. Andrews Students</li> <li>■ Saint Bonaventure High School</li> <li>■ St. Genevieve High School</li> <li>■ St Lukes School Teachers</li> <li>■ Saint Thomas Academy M</li> <li>■ San Roque High School Translations for Kiva</li> <li>■ ScoinchCorp. Unlimited</li> <li>■ Senior Current Issues 07</li> <li>■ Sewickley</li> <li>■ SH Edge High School M</li> <li>■ South High All Nations Team A</li> <li>■ Waynflete Human Rights Organization</li> <li>■ Westtown Friends School</li> <li>■ Whitnall School</li> <li>■ World Interest Club</li> <li>■ York</li> </ul>

*A selection of school-based groups on kivapedia.org.*

## **The Learning Problem**

This project will contribute to a growing body of work on the design tensions that affect the development of successful online learning communities. The groups that will be collaborating in the Kiva School to School community will have widely varied knowledge bases, skills, and socioeconomic backgrounds. I am interested in learning more about effective design for community spaces that include extremely heterogeneous groups. How do you design interfaces that allow for the representation of individual and group goals, knowledge and expertise in such community spaces?

There are two reasons why there is an urgent need for developing a theoretical grounding for the design of online learning communities. At the broadest level, this learning problem represents a central concern for educators who seek to prepare students for the challenges of workplace environments that are characterized by entirely new forms of IT-enabled collaboration. In this context, online learning communities can be seen as a tool for preparing students for the complexities of group interaction and collaborative project work in online environments. The other reason is that more and more formal schooling is expected to occur in online environments. Yet we know very little about the design principles that create effective online learning communities. This project will contribute to this learning need by prototyping ways to make interfaces for knowledge representation structured enough to provide the necessary characteristics for collaboration yet flexible enough to provide authentic accounts of learner progress.

Bronwyn Stuckey and Sasha Barab offer valuable insights for designers of online learning communities (Stuckey & Barab, 2007). The authors review research on a broad range of web-supported communities of practice with an eye toward exploring some of the design characteristics that affected their adoption and use. Instead of offering design guidelines for development of online learning communities, the authors identify six key tensions that affect the design and use of any online CoP. These tensions are:

- Content Transmission  $\leftrightarrow$  Engaged Participation
- Open Participation  $\leftrightarrow$  Bounded Participation
- Predefined Structure  $\leftrightarrow$  Emergent Structure
- Focus on Tool  $\leftrightarrow$  Focus on Systems
- Concern with Usability  $\leftrightarrow$  Concern with Sociability
- Instructional Design Process  $\leftrightarrow$  Participatory Design Process

Whether or not these variables are the most important considerations for designers of online learning communities, a variable-based approach to design is a powerful way to approach the problems at hand. Thinking of design as a negotiation of tensions allows us to adjust each variable in ways best suited for the target community (Stuckey & Barab, 2007). A key part of this research project involves discovering which variables are most relevant for online communities characterized by extreme heterogeneity, and furthermore which design solutions best support community determination of how these tensions are resolved.

Building on this idea, a key aspect of design for online communities is that community formation is an emergent process (Wegner, 1988) (Wegner, McDermott & Snyder, 2002).

How can we design learning communities in such a way that allows for their organic, idiosyncratic growth, yet provides enough structure to support the intended learning outcomes? This is another broad question, but it is central to this project. I hope to explore ways to allow communities to develop, express, and share their own learning goals, and more importantly, *to affect the goals of others*. It should also be noted that the tension between predefined structure and emergent structure is not resolved by the emergence of structure, but CoPs will continually renegotiate the structures that emerge in online communities.

Another area of research might concern the design of systems that support the activities of geographically distributed and culturally diverse teams. The bibliography at the end of this proposal suggests some of the research that I may do in this domain.

### **What ways have others been addressing this or similar problems?**

There are two broad areas of work that relate to this project—online environments that allow distributed student teams to pursue collaborative projects, and networks that use social affiliations to promote group-based philanthropy. Below is a brief sample of the work that has inspired this project:

#### **Three Online Learning Communities:**

**The GLOBE Program:** an online international community of learners collaborating on environmental research activities. [www.globe.gov](http://www.globe.gov)

**Quest Atlantis:** a situated embodied learning environment in which learners collaborate on learning activities that combine online and real-world activities. [www.atlantis.crlt.indiana.edu](http://www.atlantis.crlt.indiana.edu)

**iEARN:** an online learning community that focuses on service learning projects for international groups of student collaborators [www.learn.org](http://www.learn.org)

#### **Six Social Networks for Web-based philanthropy**

**Change.org:** A social network that raises money for issue-based social change [www.change.org](http://www.change.org)

**Donors Choose:** A site that allows individuals to financially support projects proposed by teachers in the United States [www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org)

**Global Giving:** A site that allows individuals to financially support projects proposed by international NGOs [www.globalgiving.com](http://www.globalgiving.com)

**Trade a Favor:** A social network that brokers the exchange of expertise between individuals [www.tradeafavor.org](http://www.tradeafavor.org)

**Microplace:** A site that allows individuals to contribute to microfinance groups around the world [www.microplace.org](http://www.microplace.org)

**Kaboom!** A site that allows people to post and support projects to build playspaces in communities in the United States. [www.kaboom.org](http://www.kaboom.org)

#### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this project is based primarily on situationist models of learning. Situated learning theories argue that learning is an aspect of cultural practice, and cannot be located in the individual. This approach to learning, most richly formulated in the work of Lave and Wenger, argues that learning is an ineliminably social activity—an act of participation in a community. This interpretive framework is useful because it gives us the critical tools to begin to question the power relations that enable some to participate fully in a community of learning and limits the participation of others. Understanding learning as a situated phenomenon allows us to begin to question the

contexts of learning and look at the interplay between groups of learners, or a community of practice.

Lave and Wenger conceive of learning as a process of legitimate peripheral participation. In this framework, learning is a process by which newcomers, or novice learners, come to participate with increasing expertise in a sociocultural practice by virtue of their interaction with community members of varying expertise. This practice could be as diverse as making a sandwich, participating in an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, or learning arithmetic in school. In each case, individuals are mastering practices that enable them to participate in specific ways in communities. At a very deep level, a person is changed by learning, and in the process, their relations with others change as well. As Lave and Wenger argue “Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 53). I hope that Kiva School to School will provide the tools to allow individuals and groups to document and reflect on this transformation.

However, it is overly reductive to think of learning in this sense as socially adaptive behavior or as a framework in which newcomers learn to “fit in.” The explanatory power of the LLP framework really lies in the way that newcomers upset and change communities by their increasing participation. As they argue, “... legitimate peripheral participation is far more than just a process of learning on the part of newcomers. It is a reciprocal relation between persons and practice. This means that the move of learners toward full participation in a community of practice does not take place in a static context. The practice itself is in motion” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 117). Here we see the real advantage that a situationist perspective provides— as opposed to static constructions of the learning context, Lave and Wenger argue that the learner and the community are “mutually constitutive,” and that change is a fundamental property of all communities of learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 117).

### **Design Approach**

I have described earlier how this project adopts a variable-based approach to the design of online learning communities. I believe that this approach will be the most productive way to approach the development of the online community. However, I will also describe some basic principles that will inform my design:

- **Allowing for a range of interactions.** One of the reasons why the Kiva website is so successful is that it enables individuals to participate using a very lightweight interaction.
- **Leveraging existing communities.** Instead of attempting to build an online community from the ground up, Kiva School to School uses existing Kiva lending communities that are highly motivated and desire higher levels of interaction.
- **Acknowledging the social nature of existing practice.** Participants in this project are currently sharing their activities with other members of the Kiva community. This project will build on the social nature of these exchanges.
- **Visualizing individual and group relations.** Social relationships are difficult to describe, but easy to visualize. This is particularly important with respect to the project’s focus on legitimate peripheral participation.

- **Listening to people** Teachers participating in the Kiva friends forum have become invaluable resources to inform the development of this project.
- **Prototyping** I see this project as an experiment to see which types of interface best support learning for school-based groups. I hope to test a broad range of interfaces to evaluate the affordances of each.

### **Why this technology for this problem?**

Because I am working with a population that is already participating in the Kiva web interface, I am designing web assets that complement and extend their online activities. My primary design considerations are that interactions should be lightweight, that user-generated content should be open and extensible, and that user contributions can be visually represented as much as possible. For these reasons, Kiva School to School uses AJAX (Asynchronous Javascript and XML) technologies to submit and store user contributions. AJAX allows for a variety of tools that can visually and dynamically represent the connections between individuals and groups. For example, the project timelines are based on an open source AJAX timeline tool developed by MIT's Simile project. This technology was chosen because there are a variety of open-source tools that facilitate implementation, but more importantly, data is stored in an open format (XML) so that it can be exported to other services hosted on the Kiva website.

The project pages also support a wiki groupware/Content Management system called mediawiki. This tool allows for group authoring of documents related to project tasks, and allows users to upload files. The wiki format is what is referred to as a structured wiki- a wiki environment that uses predesigned formats and prompts to facilitate and guide the input of data. I have chosen to use a structured wiki because of the many challenges of facilitating group work for teams that have varying levels of technical skill in this domain. I'm uncertain about whether this tool will be adopted by the Kiva School to School community however, because wikis present barriers for entry. Part of my research will evaluate whether a structured wiki is the most appropriate tool for this project.

### **Description of the anticipated "product"**

There are two components for in this project: a website environment and a curriculum that supports its use. The curriculum is approximately 45 pp and is currently in pdf format. To allow for ease of use and tighter integration with the interactions on the Kiva School to School website, the curriculum will be exported to html and reformatted to take advantage of the linking functionality of html.

**The website includes the following features:**

**School Page:** The school page represents all of the Kiva-related activity occurring at a given school. It aggregates information about individuals and groups. It is designed so that existing behaviors (Kiva lending activity) will be integrated with Kiva School to School activity.

The screenshot shows the Kiva School to School interface for Lick-Wilmerding High School. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, Kiva Gifts, Login, Register, Do More, My Basket, and Help Center. Below the navigation are buttons for ABOUT, CURRICULA, PROJECTS, and YOUR SCHOOL. A search bar is present with the text 'Find Projects' and a search button. Below the search bar are filters for Status (Active), Project Type (All), Region (All), and Sort By (Popularity).

The main section is titled 'Your School' and features a large image of the Lick-Wilmerding logo. To the right of the logo, the school's name and location are listed: Lick-Wilmerding High School, San Francisco, CA, United States. Below this, there are sections for 'Kiva Groups at your School' and 'Kiva Lenders at your School'. The groups section lists 'Mr. Barry's Econ Class', 'Claire's Kiva group', and 'Lick Wilmerding Kiva Lenders' with an 'ADD GROUP' button. The lenders section lists 'Maggi B.', 'Greg Mowery', 'Terry Thomas', 'Christian and Bobyn', 'JUDI O.', 'Jane', and 'Antonia Mel'.

Below the school information, there are statistics: 2 Active Projects, 6 Projects Completed, 4 Projects Supported, and 22 Schools in your network. A 'START A PROJECT' button is also visible.

The '2 Active Projects' section is a table with columns for Project, Timeline, Partners, and Description. The first project is 'Homeless Tutor Project' with a 51% completion status and 'Implementation' status. The second project is 'World Cultures Project' with a 31% completion status and 'Seeking Partners' status. Both projects have 'UPDATE' buttons.

The '4 Projects You Are Supporting' section is a table with columns for School / Project, Project Info, Country, and Description. The first project is 'EAST PALO ALTO ACADEMY PLAYGROUND PROJECT' with the description 'The students of East Palo Alto'.

*The website prototype for the school page aggregates the activities of individuals and groups within a school.*



[EPA Playground Project](#)  
Recreation

87% Complete  
Status: Fundraising

United States

Academy are planning to expand their existing playground to accomodate more students. [more >>](#)

UPDATE



[Safe Drinking Water: Kenya](#)  
Environment/ Health

33% complete  
Status: Project Planning

Kenya

Schools in Mombasa, Kenya are banding together to provide safe drinking water for their community [more >>](#)

UPDATE



[Bac Lieu School Library Project](#)  
Education/ Resources

92% complete  
Status: Documentation

Vietnam  
Fundación Paraguaya

Little Friends School is building a school library and looking for partners who will help identify books and resources that we could use. [more >>](#)

UPDATE



[English Language Project](#)  
Education

12% complete  
Status: Implementation

Ghana  
Sinapi Aba Trust

Students in St. Joseph secondary school in Accra, Ghana are looking for a partner school that would help them learn english by reviewing and commenting on student work throughout the year. [more >>](#)

UPDATE

22 Schools in Your Network



[7th Period Spanish](#)  
Bronx, NY  
United States



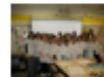
[4th Period Spanish](#)  
Bronx, NY  
United States



[West African Secondary School](#)  
Accra, Ghana



[Bato Bangala School](#)  
Kathmandu, Nepal



[Alton Elementary](#)  
Yardley, PA  
United States



[School #47](#)  
Tashkent, Uzbekistan



[Gahr High School](#)  
Cerritos, CA  
United States



[IFA](#)  
Delta, British Columbia  
Canada



[Harvard Business School](#)  
Cambridge, MA  
United States



[Joaquin Moraga I.S.](#)  
Walnut Creek, CA  
United States



[St. Andrews School](#)  
Asuncion, Paraguay



[El Estor Maya Q'eqchi' School](#)  
Guatemala



[Ngului Primary School](#)  
Machakos District, Kenya



[Baker Middle School](#)  
Baker City, OR  
United States



[H.C. Middle School](#)  
Toronto  
Canada



[Orion Junior High](#)  
Hamsville, UT  
United States



[Thousand Oaks School](#)  
Berkeley, CA  
United States



[Westtown Friends School](#)  
Westtown, PA  
United States



[Edge High School](#)  
Sahuarita, Arizona  
United States



[Saint Thomas Academy](#)  
Mendota Heights, MN  
United States



[Saint Bonaventure High School](#)  
Ventura, CA  
United States



[Beeper School](#)  
Birmingham, MI  
United States

The school and group pages also show networks in the Kiva School to School community.

**Project pages:** Project pages are where school-based groups can represent their projects and visualize the contributions of team members. Major features include a timeline that displays group progress and visually represents the contributions of group members. The project page also allows groups to record learning goals and accounts of learning progress.



Project Page



Text here about the homeless tutoring project. Text here about the homeless tutoring project. Text here about the homeless tutoring project. Text here about the homeless tutoring project. Text here about the homeless tutoring project.

About the Project

**Project Name:** Lick Wilmerding Homeless Tutoring Project  
**Location:** San Francisco California, United States  
**Lead Group:** Mr Barry's Econ Class  
**School:** Lick Wilmerding High School  
**Partners:** [Gahr High School Model UN](#), [Joaquin Moraga I.S.](#), [Harvard Business School](#)  
**Project Stage:** Seeking Partners  
**Project Start Date:** Sept 17, 2008  
**Project End Date:** Jun 12, 2009

[RSS](#) [Subscribe](#)

Project Timeline



More fundraising loans



**Butangala a Group**  
Beauty Salon, Uganda  
Raising Funds  
42% raised



**Elkhan Balaskiyev**  
Dairy, Azerbaijan  
Raising Funds  
9% raised



**Abra Sessou**  
Food Market, Togo  
Raising Funds  
35% raised



**Rosendo Services**  
Bolivia  
Raising Funds  
75% raised

Promote this entrepreneur

To promote this loan, you can email a friend about it, or you can include a link on your website.

250 x 170 block banner

160 x 380 tower banner

*The project page prototype includes a timeline that shows milestones for project completion and the contributions of different members.*

**Curriculum Pages:** These pages present the online curriculum for Kiva School to School. Activities will be linked to group pages so that groups can record projects they have completed and upload examples of work.



Curriculum Resources for Kiva School to School.

You can also upload your own resources [UPLOAD](#)



*The curriculum pages allow school based groups to browse the curriculum, upload student work, and additional curricula.*

**Group Pages:** The group page aggregates all of the information pertinent to a Kiva School to School group. Groups include classes, clubs, or school-based associations. This page provides an overview of projects that groups are pursuing or have pursued.

**Individual Pages:** This page allows individual Kiva School to School members to post their own learning goals, and serves as an online portfolio of their contributions to various Kiva School to School projects.

### **Assessment Plans and Procedures**

Kiva School to School integrates assessment individual and group assessment into the design of the project. Students and groups establish learning goals and then self-report and then self report their progress.

Assessment in the research design focuses on the evaluation of the UI for designs that best promote the formation of collaborative, distributed teams. This data will be obtained primarily from user testing with the student groups that are currently formed in the Kiva community. As noted earlier in this proposal, there is a wide range of school-based groups that are currently part of the Kiva community. My assessment plan will adopt a tiered approach to assessing student progress- Data gathered will provide the researcher with a qualitative understanding of the ways that individual and group accounts of learning facilitate group functioning. I anticipate the research sample will include at least 20 student groups currently using the Kiva website.

### **References and Further Research**

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### **Milestones and Deliverables**

June 23, 2008	Proposal draft submitted
June 23 , 2008	Project proposal submitted
Date	Project proposals approved
July 08, 2008	Design studies complete
July 15,2008	Prototype design complete
July 03, 2008	Plans for user testing and learning assessment complete
July 23, 2008	User testing and learning assessment complete
July 25, 2008	Exhibition
August 12 , 2008	Final report and eportfolio submitted

**Time Budget**

I expect to work 50 hours a week on this project until the expo.

**Supporters**

Neema Moraveji, Phd Candidate, LSTD

Max Senges founder, Supercool Schools, post doc @ Stanford

**C.V./Resume**

# Jim Ratcliffe

## Education

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### Stanford University

Palo Alto, California

*Master's student in the Learning, Design, and Technology Program, School of Education*

### Michigan State University

East Lansing, Michigan

*Ph.D. candidate in Learning, Technology and Culture (On leave, 1 year)*

- Awarded Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship in Hindi '06–'07 academic year; Summer FLAS for Nepali language at Cornell University
- Research Assistantship on MSU's Environmental Literacy Project (NSF-funded)
- Research Assistantship with the Confucius Institute to design a Chinese language learning environment in Second Life
- All Things Google: Thinking Across Software modules. Keynote at 23rd Annual Educational Technology Conference of the MSU College of Education (Freidhoff, J.R., Chair)
- Comparative International Education Society (CIES) South Asia Panel Presentation: The Ashokan Blog- Social Technologies in Indian Primary Education

### Bates College

Lewiston, Maine

*Bachelor of Arts: Anthropology*

*Thesis: Contested Histories—Representations of Partition in Modern Indian and Pakistani TV Serials*

### The School for International Training

Kathmandu, Nepal

*A comprehensive program of study focusing on Nepali language, history, and culture.*

*Field research on the material culture of indigenous fishing communities, Gorkha District*

## Educational Publishing & Curriculum Design

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### Science Writer

2005–Present

*Wrote and edited high interest feature articles and other content for major publishers*

- Clients include: Holt Rinehart and Winston, Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley, Editorial, Kaplan Review, Sleek Software, Publisher's Partnership, Anthology, and Symmetry

### Director

2002–Present

#### **Himalayan Educators Development Project: Sikkim, India**

*Founded an organization that works with government agencies and NGOs to produce quality educational materials suited to the needs of educators working in resource-poor environments*

- Researched and reported on the status of secondary education in Sikkim; helped government agencies and NGOs develop locally appropriate environmental science curricula
- Funded by US-AEP/AUSAID Project EcoWatch to research, write, and publish *Explore Your World!* a 300 pp environmental science activity handbook for Primary and Secondary teachers in Sikkim (500 hardbound copies, .pdfs online)
- Funded by US-AEP/AUSAID Gangtok Water Supply and Sanitation Project to research, write, and publish *Your Health is in Your Hands!* a 60 pp health and hygiene activity handbook for Primary and Secondary teachers in Sikkim (100 softcover copies, .pdfs online)

- Conducted teacher training workshops in environmental education in partnership with local NGOs and the Government of Sikkim
- Consulting for Taktse International School to develop science and technology curricula; Teacher training in blog and web publishing, designed, edited, and published the school's website 2006 and 2007 Prospectus

## **Editor II, Secondary Science**

1998–2005

**Holt, Rinehart and Winston: Austin, TX**

*Proven ability to manage projects and meet deadlines within budget in a demanding publishing environment*

- Researched, wrote, and edited science textbooks and ancillary materials to meet state and national guidelines for science education
- Contracted and supervised authors, reviewers, and consultants to produce high quality materials within deadlines
- Facilitated interdepartmental communication and implemented strategies to improve efficiency and reduce costs
- Assisted in the preparation of detailed annual budgets
- Collaborated with marketing and sales to increase market share of science programs
- Served five years on Civic and Charitable Board, reviewing grant proposals and distributing charitable contributions in excess of \$250,000

## Non-Profit/NGO Experience

### **Himalayan Educators Development Project**

Austin, Texas; Sikkim, India

Founder and director of an organization that seeks to improve access to quality secondary science education in Sikkim, India

### **Political Asylum Project of Austin**

Austin, Texas

Researched and prepared casework for refugees seeking political asylum in the United States

### **Tech Tots**

Austin, Texas

Trained low-income families with preschool-age children in the use of computers and educational software

### **Ashoka, Innovators for the Public**

Washington, DC

Supported a fellowship of nearly 400 social entrepreneurs with innovative solutions for social and environmental problems in Nepal, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Indonesia

## Skills and Qualifications

- Managing concurrent projects with initiative and creativity
- Supervising staff and outside contractors in the production of quality work under deadlines
- Writing and editing documents for publication quickly with a minimum of revision
- Grantwriting training and course certification, UT Austin
- **Spoken Nepali:** High Proficiency (ACTFL); **Written Nepali:** Intermediate Proficiency
- **Spoken Hindi:** Basic Proficiency; **Written Hindi:** Basic Proficiency
- **Software:** Integrated publishing applications; Graphic Design/Desktop Publishing; HTML Editors; Audio production; Podcasting; Social software