**WELL-BEING BY DESIGN FELLOWSHIP**

**2024 CASE STUDY**

The 2024 Well-Being by Design Fellows participated in a four-month professional development program for designers and producers of interactive kids' technology and media. They met online to workshop their current projects, network with other fellows, and gain insights from research and industry leaders as they worked to incorporate principles of well-being into their designs. We are delighted to share highlights from each fellow's experience.

# Aatash Parikh

Aatash Parikh is a software engineer turned educator. He worked at Khan Academy and on a variety of edtech projects before deciding to work in schools. While at High Tech High, Aatash learned about project-based learning as a pedagogy that promotes well-being and academic engagement, and he felt a need for tech tools to support and assess this form of learning. Aatash built the first version of Inkwire while teaching middle school computer science in Oakland Unified School District. It is now in more than 30 schools across the country.

inkwire

**PRODUCT:** Inkwire **TARGET AGE:** 9 and up

Inkwire is a K-12 edtech platform where teachers and students design and collaborate on authentic, project-based learning experiences and curate portfolios of their best work.

**INKWIRE.CO**

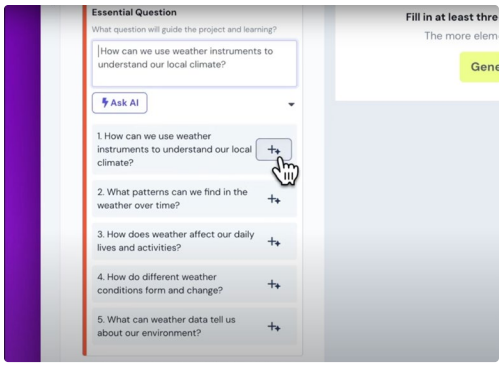
## HOW WE INCORPORATE WELL-BEING COMPONENTS NOW

The Well-Being by Design fellowship introduced us to the Responsible Innovation in Technology for Children (RITEC) framework and its eight components of well-being. We found several elements of well-being that Inkwire was already addressing:

**Empowerment:** Students have choice in how they demonstrate their learning — whether through written responses, video recordings, etc.

**Identity/Self-Actualization:** Projects allow students to explore their interests, and students can then share their stories through their own customizable portfolios.

**Social Connection:** Commenting and sharing features inherent to Inkwire promote interaction among the entire community of learners, not just as a one-way dialogue between student and teacher.




Inkwire's AI-powered project design tool

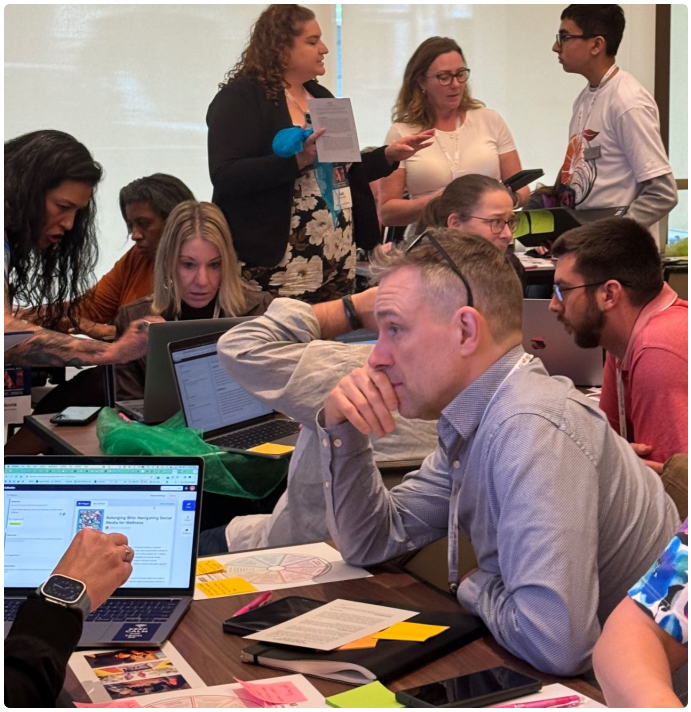
## WHAT MORE CAN OUR PRODUCT DO TO ADDRESS CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING?

We also found clear opportunities for growth in a few other elements of the framework

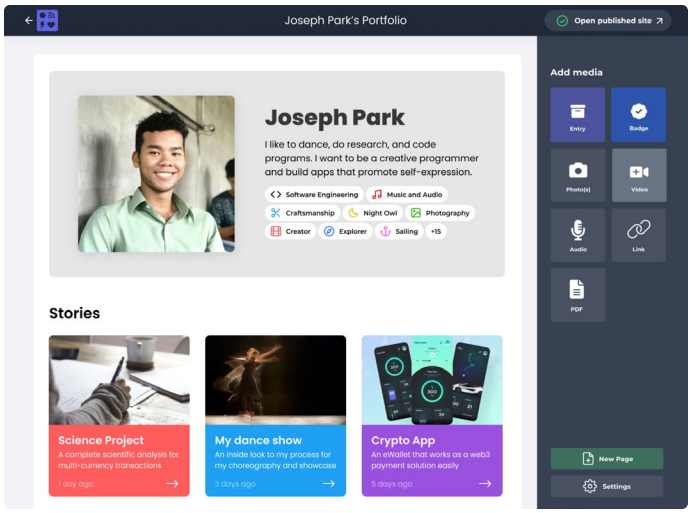
**Safety (in Social Connections):** Even with the presence of many social interaction features in our product, we often noticed students engaged with each other less than they could – for example, only commenting on each others' work when required by the teacher. The "Safety" element of the framework made us realize that students may feel vulnerable when sharing their work and feedback in a semi-public context, and that we could take specific steps to allow students to feel more comfortable and encouraged to do so.

**Emotional Regulation:** Inkwire was specifically designed not to feel like traditional learning management systems (LMS), which are heavily task- and deadline-oriented. However, we have learned that Inkwire requires students to operate at a higher level of executive functioning to keep track of the various to-do's in their projects. Our goal is to incorporate some of the task management and calendaring features of a traditional LMS while maintaining the empowering design of Inkwire.

**Boosting Creativity:** Inkwire presents a great platform for students to display their creativity, but we felt that we could do more to help students actually more directly create on the platform. For us, that may mean building in more authoring and creation tools into the platform directly, rather than requiring students to do that outside of the platform.



Students and educators sharing the projects they created on Inkwire at a recent live workshop




Inkwire helps students build portfolios of their best work

## REFLECTIONS

One of the main reasons we were so excited to participate in this fellowship is that it gave us a framework for operationalizing our values. We've made a lot of design decisions that we believe promote well-being, but have not had a research-backed way to communicate our choices or to measure how well they were working. Using the RITEC framework was incredibly valuable for us for this reason.

We had an opportunity to learn from an accomplished group of guest speakers throughout the fellowship who were influential in our thinking about how to incorporate well-being into our design process. Tiffany Gagnon, a designer at the Scratch Foundation, shared about how they are improving the onboarding flow for new users on the Scratch platform. Learning how they are aiming to maintain users' **empowerment** while increasing their **safety** helped us see how an established product team is wrestling with the same tradeoffs in their process. Pia Breum Corlin at the LEGO Foundation, shared with us how they have concretely operationalized the well-being framework by creating their own decision-making matrix that they use when implementing new features. This encouraged us to create our own internal process that keeps us accountable for incorporating well-being into our product development.

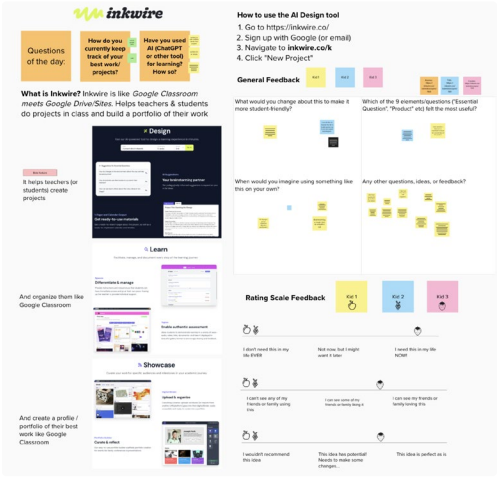
Working with the Youth Design Team was a highlight of our experience. We have been working on a new project design tool for teachers, but have been exploring the idea of making it student-facing. Our feedback session with the Youth Design Team gave us a chance to get direct input on how the tool would need to be changed to better interface directly with students. Here are some of the changes we are making as a result of their feedback:

+ Allow students to try the tool without having to sign up or be invited by their teacher
+ Provide more customization options for the project design
+ Add calendaring functionality that help students plan projects around school constraints

## LOOKING AHEAD

Our ultimate goal is to incorporate the elements of well-being into our product design process. We were inspired by some of our guest speakers to think about how we might build our own internal toolkit that is lightweight and flexible enough to be a regular part of our design cycle. As a small team, our design process has yet to be systematized, but we are growing quickly and at the perfect time in our journey to create a process that incorporates well-being right from the start. We also are planning to build regular youth feedback and co-design into this process.

We are also excited to launch our student-facing project design tool. In addition to the tangible feedback we received from the Youth Design Team, they inspired us to more quickly build out tools that directly interface with young people who are working both in and out of the classroom context. We aim to launch in the next month or two, and the Youth Design team members we worked with will be the first to know when we do!




Mural from Youth Design feedback session

SESAME WORKSHOP

Joan Ganz Cooney Center

For more information about the Well-Being by Design Fellowship program, please visit joanganzcooneycenter.org/fellowship2024