

Making a School: a case study in globalizing the liberal arts curriculum

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MAKING A SCHOOL IN KENYA: A CLASS PRESENTATION



This public presentation will showcase the work of students in **EDC 226, The Making of a School**. The project that will be presented is the draft document for a new girls' boarding school in Kenya, created by students in collaboration with Kenyan educators and experts on the ground. Teams of students will discuss their designs for the school building, the curriculum, the mission, schedule, budget, funding plan, hiring strategies and governance structure.

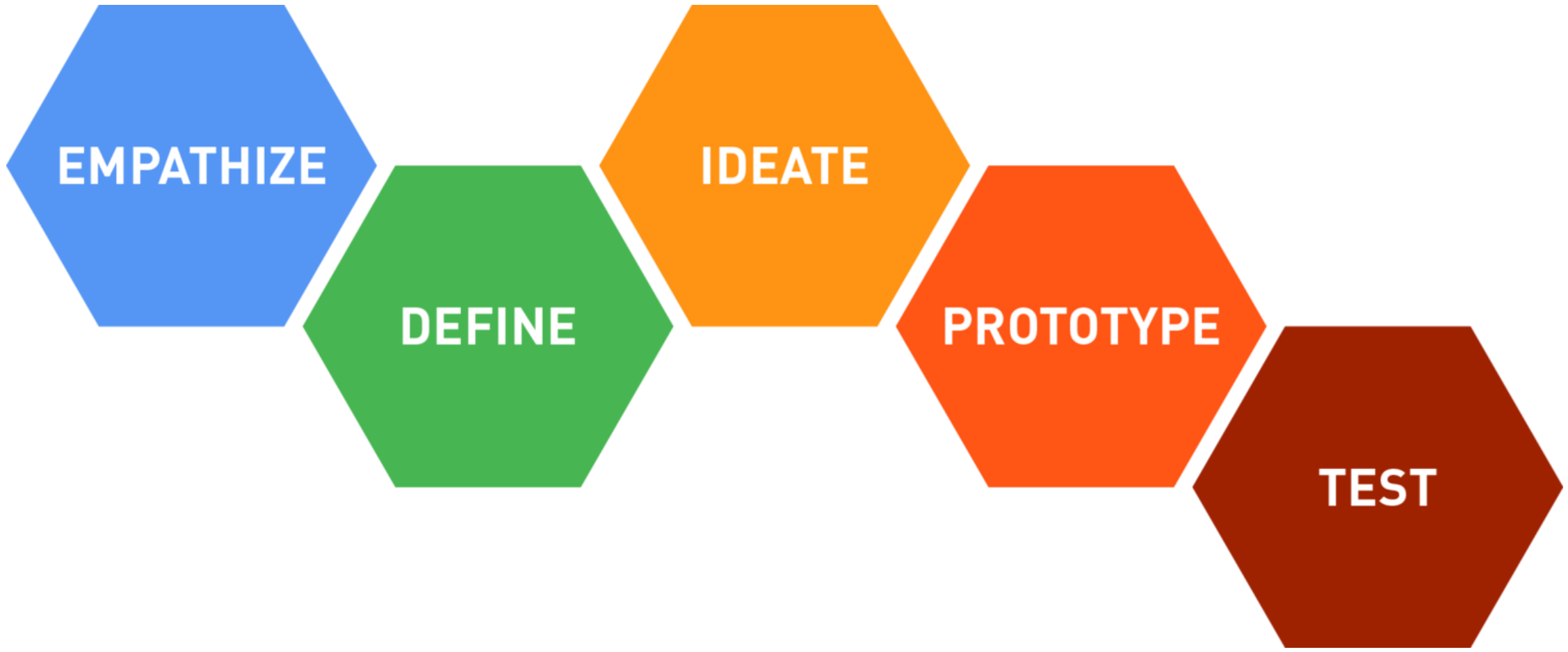
In creating this preliminary plan for their school, students used a range of sites and resources at Smith, including the GIS Center, Design Thinking, and the Knowledge Lab.

Tuesday, May 1 at 10:30 a.m.
Lewis Global Studies Center Lounge



Givens that supported and legitimized the process

- Co-teaching with a Kenyan faculty person at Smith
- Contacts on the ground in Kenya
- Authentic faculty commitment to make the actual school



The Design Thinking Process

Teams linked to Kenyan consultants

- **Mission, admissions and marketing** (website, marketing plan)
- **Schedules and regulations** (handbook and all non-academic policies)
- **Governance and personnel** (hiring, board membership, etc.)
- **Curriculum** (alternative approaches/Kenyan state curriculum)
- **Budget and fundraising** (identifying donors, drafting a base budget)
- **Site-planning:** (mapping, site analysis and building)

Zoomed and in-person Kenyan expertise

- Enoch Wambua: Senator from Kitui County, Kenya
- Anne Mawathe: Kenyan journalist; documentary film maker and advocate for girls
- Linda Dounia Rebeiz: ALA grad; currently curriculum developer at ALU, Mauritius
- Elishibah Msengeti: Head of Student Life, M-pesa Academy, Nairobi

Our on-site expert:

- Hilda Nalwanga: ALA grad; class Teaching Assistant

Site Planning

Essential Parameters

Parameters



- School design
- Evaluation

Infrastructure

Distance from the cities/commercial areas

Distance from the main roads

Distance from nearby facilities and local communities

Environmental

Distance from stream/water source

Soil Condition

Local Climate

Sound Level & Air Pollution(future)

Animals and biodiversity (future plan)

Physical

Land Slope and Elevation

Flood Prone

Curriculum: Overview

- Framing our Curriculum around girls' leadership and empowerment
 - Organizational Process
 - Merging Ideas, Values, and Priorities
- Kenyan Curriculum
 - Lower Secondary
 - Upper Secondary
- Learning Outcomes
- Innovative Subjects
- Pedagogy
 - Inclusive Classrooms
 - Assessments and Grading
- Next Steps and 5 Year Plan

Budget and Marketing: Individual Giving Program

- Membership based
- Target demographics
 - Kenyans living abroad
 - Five college community
- Communications
 - Email and paper mail
 - Website page
 - Social media
 - Shareable media
- Costs
 - Website
 - Donor and communication management
 - Physical mailings
 - Development staff

The benefits of globalizing coursework in a class like this:

- Iterative process of Design Thinking reinforces the key lesson that knowledge is flexible, subject to revision
- Working on “real problems” promotes unprecedented investment in students
- Underscores the subjectivity of cultural understanding

Liabilities of globalizing coursework

- Time and logistics
- Exporting a hegemonic perspective, even unwittingly. Even with all the prior givens, students still felt uneasy about the work, e.g. their privilege and questionable authority for creating solutions to problems they had only studied second-hand.

Lingering questions

- How do we justify and legitimize the work of privileged, western students on real-world problems in the developing world?
- How much prior knowledge is sufficient to make collaboration authentic, meaningful, and useful?