**Abstract:** To enhance authenticity and connectedness of school learning, our team has been working with school partners on multiple design-based research projects to bridge Knowledge Building in classrooms with public discourse. In the *IdeaMagnets* project, we design technological tools to engage Grades 6-9 students in critically examining news and incorporating multiple perspectives to build ideas as a collective. In the *DataExpedition* project, we support students to analyze open data related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Classroom investigations are ongoing.