

May 5, 2015

Kelly Terpak
U.S. Department of Education,
400 Maryland Avenue SW., Room 4C107,
Washington, DC 20202–5930.

RE: Letter of Intent for Collaboration
“Collaboration for 21st Century K-12 Teaching and Learning (C21CTL)”
CFDA Number: 84.411 - Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund
Opportunity Number: ED-GRANTS-033015-001
Competition ID: 84-411P2015-1
Applicant: Knowledge Building in Action, EIN 27-3711500

Dear Sirs:

I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Theory and Practice at the State University of New York at Albany. I am writing this letter to confirm my intent to collaborate with Knowledge Building in Action on the proposed project: Collaboration for 21st Century K-12 Teaching and Learning (C21CTL).

My research sponsored by National Science Foundation and other sources explores pedagogical designs to foster sustained knowledge building over long terms and across social levels using collaborative online environments. Particularly I have conducted a series of design-based experiments that demonstrated new possibilities of transforming classrooms into knowledge building communities that engage in dynamic collaboration for sustained idea advancement, supported by transformed roles of the teachers. A set of new research and assessment tools has been developed to examine collaborative knowledge building online. To support student-driven adaptive structuring of sustained knowledge building practices, we created Idea Thread Mapper (ITM) to visualize threads of ideas growing in extended online discourse and feedback on the emerging progress and epistemic and social structures. Our current NSF project expands ITM to support cross-community collaboration and reflection for sustained knowledge building supported by automated analysis of idea threads. An international network of classrooms have been participating in these projects.

I look forward to working with Knowledge Building in Action on the proposed project as a Co-Principal Investigator. My main role will focus on leading the research analysis for Goal 3: Use technological tools that assess learning through the development, visualization, and rapid analysis of data to inform instructional practices and improve learning outcomes. I will supervise a team of graduate research assistants to conduct data analysis using an integration of automated and semi-automated analytic tools. We estimate the cost of this work to be approximately \$156,000/year for the three-year period of the project. I expect that this project

will make a significant contribution to developing and disseminating research-based classroom innovations that are needed to better prepare our students for a technology-infused, knowledge-based, globalized economy and society.

Please contact me directly should further information is needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jianwei Zhang', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jianwei Zhang, PhD
Associate Professor
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University at Albany, SUNY
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