

# PRERNA RAVI

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## EDUCATION

### MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY | CAMBRIDGE, MA

**Ph.D., Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS)** | 2022 - Present

- MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL)
- Advisor: Hal Abelson

**S.M., Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS)** | 2022 - 2024

- Thesis: *Large Language Model Tools for Project-Based Learning* [[link](#)]

### GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY | ATLANTA, GA

**B.S., Computer Science** | 2018 - 2022

- Advisors: Thad Starner and Neha Kumar
- GPA: 4.0 / 4.0 (Highest Honors)
- Thesis: *Leveraging Sign Language Recognition in Educational Games for Deaf Children*

## RESEARCH STATEMENT

My research focuses on designing AI powered ecosystems that foster **group collaboration, equity and creativity**. I develop inclusive tools that empower diverse stakeholders to responsibly engage, learn, and create with AI. I have developed frameworks for evaluating Human-AI Interaction, Discourse Analysis, and AI Literacy in diverse contexts. I engage in ethnographic fieldwork, participatory design, system development, and evaluation.

**Keywords:** Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), Generative Artificial Intelligence, Group Collaboration, Co-creativity, CS & AI literacy

## PUBLICATIONS

### Peer-Reviewed Conference Papers

- [C1] **Pernna Ravi**, John Masla, Gisella Kakoti, Grace Lin, Emma Anderson, Matt Taylor, Anastasia Ostrowski, Cynthia Breazeal, Eric Klopfer, and Hal Abelson. [“Co-designing Large Language Model Tools for Project-Based Learning with K12 Educators.”](#) *Proceedings of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2025)*. 🏆 **Honorable Mention (Top 5%)**.
- [C2] Isabella Pu, **Pernna Ravi**, Linh Dinh, Chelsea Joe, Caitlin Ogoe, Zixuan Li, Cynthia Breazeal, and Anastasia Ostrowski. [“How can we learn and use AI at the same time?: Participatory Design of GenAI with High School Students.”](#) *Proceedings of the ACM Interaction Design and Children (IDC 2025)*.
- [C3] Grace Lin, Carúmey Stevens, Amalia Toutziaridi, **Pernna Ravi**, and Emma Anderson. [“ABCDE: An Action-Oriented Framework for Collaborative Activities.”](#) *Proceedings of the 18th International Conference on Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL 2025)*.
- [C4] Mak Ahmad, **Pernna Ravi**, David Karger, Marc Facciotti, and Kwan-Liu Ma. [“Beyond AI Feedback: How Metacognitive Requirements in Practice Exams Transform Student Learning Behaviors.”](#) *Proceedings of the 12<sup>th</sup> ACM Conference on Learning @ Scale (L@S 2025)*.
- [C5] John Masla, Christina Bosch, **Pernna Ravi**, Lydia Guterman, Sarah Wharton, Mary Cate Gustafson-Quiett, Samar Abu Hegly, Calvin Macatantan, Eric Klopfer, Cynthia Breazeal and Hal Abelson. [“Supporting AI Fluency Teaching Through the Development of Assessments for Classroom Use.”](#) *Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI 2025)*.
- [C6] **Pernna Ravi**, Robert Parks, John Masla, Hal Abelson, and Cynthia Breazeal. [“Data comes from the real world”: A Constructionist Approach to Mainstreaming K12 Data Science Education](#). *Proceedings of the ACM Virtual Global Computing Education Conference V.1 (SIGCSE Virtual 2024)*.
- [C7] Safinah Ali, **Pernna Ravi**, Katherine Moore, Hal Abelson, and Cynthia Breazeal. [“A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: Co-designing Text-to-image Generation Learning Materials for K-12 with Educators”](#). *Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI 2024)*.
- [C8] Safinah Ali, **Pernna Ravi**, Daniella DiPaola, Randi Williams, and Cynthia Breazeal. [“Constructing Dreams using Generative AI”](#). *Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI 2024)*.
- [C9] David Kim, **Pernna Ravi**, Randi Williams, and Daeun Yoo. [“App Planner: Utilizing Generative AI in K-12 Mobile App Development Education”](#). *Proceedings of the ACM Interaction Design and Children (IDC 2024)*.
- [C10] **Pernna Ravi**, Annalisa J. Broski, Glenda Stump, Hal Abelson, Eric Klopfer, and Cynthia Breazeal. [“Understanding Teacher Perspectives and Experiences after Deployment of AI Literacy Curriculum in Middle-school Classrooms”](#). *Proceedings of the 16th annual International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation (ICERI 2023), IATED 2023*.
- [C11] Alex Duncan, Ana Rusch, **Pernna Ravi**, and David Joyner. [“The L@St Eight Years: A Review of Papers and Authors at Learning @ Scale”](#). *Proceedings of the 10<sup>th</sup> ACM Conference on Learning @ Scale (L@S 2023)*.
- [C12] **Pernna Ravi**, Azra Ismail, and Neha Kumar. [“The Pandemic Shift to Remote Learning under Resource Constraints”](#). *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction (CSCW 2021)*.
- [C13] Dhruva Bansal, **Pernna Ravi**, Matthew So, Pranay Agrawal, Ishan Chadha, Ganesh Murugappan, and Colby Duke. 2021. [“CopyCat: Using Sign Language Recognition to Help Deaf Children Acquire Language Skills.”](#) *Extended Abstracts of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2021)* 🏆 **ACM CHI Student Research Competition Winner 2021**

## Journal Papers

- [J1] **Prerna Ravi\***, Dong Won Lee\*, Emma Anderson, and Grace C. Lin. “[Leveraging Large Language Models to Identify Conversation Threads in Collaborative Learning](#).” *In preparation: Journal of Educational Data Mining (JEDM) 2025*.
- [J2] Ariel Blobstein, Marc T. Facciotti, Michele Igo, David Karger, **Prerna Ravi**, Kamali Sripathi, and Kobi Gal. “[#let’s-discuss: Analyzing Students’ use of Emoji when interacting with course readings](#)”. *Intl. Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education (IJAIED) 2024*.

## Short Papers and Organized Workshops

- [S1] **Prerna Ravi**, Annalisa J. Broski, Glenda Stump, Angela Daniel, Hal Abelson, Eric Klopfer, and Cynthia Breazeal. “[An Art Teacher and AI: Creating Adaptable Curriculum for AI Literacy](#)”. *Play Make Learn Conference (PML 2023)*.
- [S2] Safinah Ali, **Prerna Ravi**, Katherine Moore, Cynthia Breazeal, and Hal Abelson. “[Demystifying Text-to-Image Generation for K12 Educators](#).” *In Workshops and Tutorials: International Society of Learning Sciences (ISLS 2023)*.
- [S3] Glenda Stump, **Prerna Ravi**, Annalisa J. Broski, Angela Daniel, Hal Abelson, Eric Klopfer, and Cynthia Breazeal. “[Ethical by Design: Teaching Middle-school Students to Think Ethically About AI](#)”. *AI Literacy Workshop at the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2023)*.

## GRANTS

- Empowering Learners with a Low-Barrier Mobile Data Science Toolkit | **Award amount: \$300,000**
  - Learning Engineering Tools Competition, 2024
  - **Prerna Ravi** (Lead researcher and proposal writer), Robert Parks, Raechel Walker, David Kim, Hal Abelson (PI)

## FELLOWSHIPS

- Teaching Development Fellow, Teaching and Learning Lab (TLL) MIT, 2024-2025
- Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED) DEIA Fellow, 2024-2025 (w/ Prof. Victor Lee, Stanford GSE)
- MIT CIS/Starr Student Travel Fellow, 2024 (UNESCO HQ speaker)
- MIT Work of the Future Fellow, 2023-2024
- Ida M. Green Memorial Fellow, 2022-2023
- MIT Vice Chancellor’s Inclusive Excellence Fellow, 2022-2023
- Adobe Research Women in Technology Scholar, 2021

## AWARDS

- Best Paper Honorable Mention (top 5% of submissions), CHI 2025
- MIT Graduate Student Council (GSC) Travel Grant, 2025
- Winner - Learning Engineering Tools Competition, 2024
- Special Recognition for Outstanding Reviews, CHI 2024
- Kaufman Teaching Certificate, 2024
- Winner - ACM CHI Student Research Competition, 2021
- Georgia Tech Outstanding Junior (EDS Rising Senior) Award, 2020-2021
- Georgia Tech Outstanding Sophomore Award, 2019-2020
- Google Computer Science Research Mentorship (CSRMP), 2021
- President’s Undergraduate Research Award (PURA), 2020
- Apple Women in Science and Engineering Scholarship, 2021
- Georgia Tech Faces of Inclusive Excellence Honoree, 2021
- Microsoft Invent Finalist, 2021
- Winner - Nunn School of International Affairs Paper Competition for Global Development, 2021
- Rewriting the Code Fellowship, 2020-2021
- Apple’s Grace Hopper Conference Scholarship, 2020
- Honorable Mention, Microsoft Global Hackathon, 2020
- GT College of Computing Grace Hopper Conference Scholarship, 2019
- Faculty Honors for 4.0 GPA, 2018-2022

## INDUSTRY RESEARCH INTERSHIPS

**Microsoft**, Design Researcher Intern | *May 2023 – August 2023*

Co-designed generative AI tools *with and for* neurodivergent and motor disability groups within Microsoft’s Windows + AI UX research team.

**Google**, Student Researcher Intern | *January 2022 – April 2022*

Developed new fingerspelling datasets and models for sign language recognition and integrated those into educational games for deaf children born to hearing parents. Advised by [Dr. Thad Starner](#).

Google Research Blog at I/O 2023: [Technologies for inclusive and fair ML applications](#) | [YouTube Video](#)

**Avanti Fellows, Research Intern** | *June 2021 – October 2021*

Designed and evaluated a girls' leadership and mentorship program for rural high school students in India, using ethnographic research methods to facilitate equitable access to high-quality college education and accelerate professional growth with low-income communities.

Blog: [LedBy Girls' Leadership and Mentorship Program](#)

## SOFTWARE ENGINEERING INTERNSHIPS

**Microsoft, Software Engineer Intern** | *May 2022 – July 2022*

Built an end-to-end Office 365 Extension for Microsoft's Artifact Management System with ML-based recommendations, used for onboarding all legal matters (involving law firms for example), their stakeholders and documents into the Office 365 Infrastructure (used by 220,000 employees).

**Microsoft, Software Engineer Intern** | *May 2021 – July 2021*

Developed new intelligent solutions and microservices for the Office 365 Enterprise Records Management System used for storing, migrating, and retrieving 6M+ regulatory, legal, and business-critical electronic records spanning 100 countries for 160K+ employees. Trained ML models to automatically categorize records and extract their metadata.

**Microsoft, Software Engineer Intern** | *May 2020 – July 2020*

Designed a centralized telemetry service and data dashboards (for web platforms used by internal consultants tracking their projects and finances) to assist debugging and product improvement, thereby directly impacting 5000+ users.

## RESEARCH PROJECTS

**Collaborative AI for Learning (CAIL)** | *2024 – Present* | *Taxonomy published at CSCL 2025, In submission: jEDM 2025* | *Project link: [\[link\]](#)*

Advisors: Eric Klopfer

CAIL serves as a conversational agent designed to (1) actively engage with student groups, modeling effective teamwork and fostering discussion to promote deeper learning; (2) support teachers in designing, implementing, and assessing collaborative activities. We program the system to encourage inclusive discussions by probing opinions from all students, offering suggestions to advance conversations, and providing resources to aid project completion. Our lines of inquiry span from the personas and interaction types of the agents to analytic tool development to formative and reflective assessments for learning. Also developed a new taxonomy for identifying effective collaboration used to train multimodal models and measure group productivity, distributed creativity, and learning outcomes.

**LLM Tools for Project-Based Learning** | *2024 – Present* | *Published at CHI 2025 – Best Paper Honorable Mention* | *SM thesis [\[link\]](#)*

Advisors: Hal Abelson, Cynthia Breazeal

The purpose of this project is to explore the use of technology in enhancing project-based learning (PBL) by addressing the challenges teachers face in planning and assessing collaborative learning. Specifically, we focus on developing AI-powered tools, leveraging Large Language Models (LLMs), to improve the evaluation of student learning outcomes in areas such as teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving. Conducted interviews, co-design studies (with brainstorming, storyboarding, conceptual wireframes) and built LLM prototypes with K12 educators. Created a new design framework outlining the affordances and challenges of integrating AI into PBL environments.

**Participatory Design of Generative AI for High Schools** | *2024 – Present* | *Published at IDC 2025*

Advisors: Anastasia Ostrowski, Cynthia Breazeal

We contribute to discussions on participatory design (PD) and GenAI in education. We interview high school educators and use those insights to develop PD workshops with students, a group underrepresented in prior design research in this space. We engage in GenAI tool design and policy development with these students to identify values, concerns, and aspirations around academic integrity, misinformation, AI over-reliance, explainability, and transparency. We also propose new design guidelines for implementing GenAI tools and policies in high schools.

**Data Science Literacy for Citizenship** | *2022 – Present* | *Phase 1 published at SIGCSE Virtual 2024*

Advisors: Hal Abelson, Victor Lee

This project proposes a participatory action framework to support youth in communicating critical data perspectives for community action. We develop low-barrier mobile toolkits aimed at educating students on the fundamentals of collecting, analyzing, and visualizing data collected from the environment. We provide them with a framework for planning investigations for advocacy efforts (around issues of climate change) and prepare them to share the evidence obtained using IoT devices. Built tools and scaffolded resources, in combination with plugged and unplugged activities, to make data science literacy accessible to students of diverse backgrounds. Developed professional development materials for educators to seamlessly integrate and adapt these in their classrooms.

**NB: Social Annotation Platform for Large-scale Classroom Collaboration** | *2022 – Present* | *Published at IJAIED 2024*

Advisor: David Karger

NB is an in-place document annotation platform that enables and encourages students and faculty to collaboratively author and discuss questions, comments, and answers in the margins of course resources. Conducted multiple user studies and experiments, through the collection of qualitative and quantitative data, to guide the ideation, prototyping, and, and development of new features within NB as well as inform the revamping of large-scale (1000+ students) course resources and curriculum.

**Modeling 'Aha!' Moments as a Proxy for Learning** | *Spring 2024*

Collaborator: Eden Adler

This work proposes a novel approach to identifying a real-time learning signal, specifically focusing on the "Aha! Moment," representing sudden comprehension or insight. Although psychologists, educators, and cognitive scientists have explored these observable markers of insight, the potential of using machine learning to detect these moments in real-time remains untapped. Our research seeks to utilize our knowledge of these

observable cues to computationally model them, creating a signal that makes the learning process visible. We explore the explainability of a relationship between facial and body language features and the occurrence of aha moments, thereby offering a clearer understanding of affective responses in learning. This could provide valuable feedback on the human learning process, particularly in insight learning.

#### **Generative AI Tutor: Personal Pedagogical Agent for Underrepresented College Students in Intro to Computing | 2023 - Present**

Advisors: Hal Abelson, Cynthia Breazeal

This generative AI powered tutor aims to promote culturally relevant, equitable education in introduction to programming courses by acting as a personal pedagogical agent to students from marginalized contexts. Designed tutor interactions that enhance student learning outcomes within diverse learning environments. Investigating the capabilities of Large Language Models (LLMs) in understanding and critiquing student-written solutions, providing detailed, scaffolded feedback, and the impact of different forms of model-generated feedback on student learning and problem-solving.

#### **MIT App Inventor: Block-based Mobile App Programming Environment | 2022- Present | *Published at IDC 2024***

Advisor: Hal Abelson

MIT App Inventor is an open-source, visual programming environment that allows everyone (including children) to build fully functional apps for phones and tablets. The project seeks to democratize software development by empowering all people, especially young people, to move from technology consumption to technology creation. Developed extensive curricula and teacher professional development resources on the use and integration of App Inventor within diverse contexts.

#### **Responsible AI for Computational Action (RAICA) | 2022 – Present | *Published at AAAI 2025, ICERI 2023, CHI 2023, PML 2023***

Advisors: Hal Abelson, Cynthia Breazeal, Eric Klopfer

RAICA focusses on growing middle-school students' skills as informed consumers and ethical producers of AI tools and technology through computational action. The curriculum is project-centered: students produce authentic learning artifacts by the end of each module and their learning is driven through explorations. Developed frameworks to assess fundamental computational thinking and AI literacy skills and conducted in-depth, iterative analysis to evaluate the efficacy of the curriculum.

#### **K12 Generative AI Literacy for Students and Educators | 2022 – 2024 | *Published at AAAI 2024 (2 papers), ISLS 2023***

Advisors: Hal Abelson, Cynthia Breazeal

This project focusses on making generative AI knowledge as well as tools accessible to everyone, regardless of background and age group, using both interactive (plugged) and non-interactive (unplugged) resources. Co-developed, taught, and investigated the long-term effectiveness of generative AI educational programs tailored for adult learners, policy makers, as well as K-12 educators and students. Initiatives also include conducting professional development workshops for K-12 teachers on the integration of generative AI into classroom settings.

#### **Sparki: Interactive Learning Companion for AI Education | Summer 2023 | *Tool Website: [\[link\]](#)***

Collaborator: Randi Williams

S.P.A.R.K.I. (Students' Personal Assistant for Reinforcing Knowledge and Innovation) is a GPT-powered chatbot that scaffolds children's work on AI projects. Sparki provides programming assistance, gives students feedback on their ideas, and socially mediates creative thinking. Measured the effectiveness and usability of Sparki through evaluative user studies.

#### **Using Sign Language Recognition to Develop Educational Games for Deaf Children | 2019 – 2022 | *Published at CHI 2021 – SRC Winner***

Advisor: Thad Starner

CopyCat and Popsign are two educational games that help deaf children and their hearing parents communicate with one another by facilitating sign language acquisition. Designed and developed a real-time motion capture and calibration system (body, hands and face) in Unity by leveraging 4K depth cameras and pose estimators: Microsoft Kinect, Google MediaPipe and AlphaPose. Achieved user-independent word accuracy of 90.6% for a sign language recognition pipeline built using Hidden Markov Models (HMMs).

#### **Technology and Design for Empowerment on the Margins | 2020 – 2021 | *Published at CSCW 2021***

Advisor: Neha Kumar

Research in Human-centered computing and global development. Conducted empirical and ethnographic studies to examine the transition into online learning within the education system for underserved communities in India, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Employed qualitative methods such as interviews and surveys to study the workflows and social dynamics across different sectors and intersections of the Indian population methods such as class, gender and caste. Outlined areas for improvement in the design of online learning platforms, by partnering with students, teachers, non-profit organizations and school administrators within marginalized contexts.

#### **Co-Designing Parent-Education Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) with Hispanic Immigrants | 2019 – 2020**

Advisors: Betsy DiSalvo, Marisol Wong-Villacres

We explore the design of ICTs for diversifying strategies that low-income Hispanic immigrant parents use to effectively engage in their children's education, given information needs, cultural practices and socio-economic context. Organized participatory design workshops and conducted ethnographic studies informing the role of bilingual parent-education liaisons in assisting immigrant parents in the United States.

## **SERVICE AND NON-PROFIT WORK**

- **Organizing Committee** (Global co-chair), CHI 2026
- **Organizing Committee** (Diversity and Inclusion co-chair), UIST 2024
  - Introduced a new category of best paper awards to UIST for those fostering *Belonging and Inclusion* in the HCI community, organized diversity lunches for women and LGBTQ+ participants, spearheaded a panel of women leaders in HCI, and organized travel awards to support historically marginalized groups
- **Student Volunteer**, CHI 2025

- **Program Committee** (Associate Chair), CHI 2025: Late Breaking Work [10 reviews]
- **Program Committee** (Senior reviewer), ISLS 2025 [5 reviews]
- **Program Committee** (Associate Chair), CSCW 2024 [4 reviews]
- **Program Committee**, MIT AI + Education Summit 2024 [10 reviews]

- **Reviewer**, CHI 2024, 2025 [2 reviews] [Special Recognition for Outstanding Reviews](#)
- **Reviewer**, Journal of Education, 2025 [1 review]
- **Reviewer**, JMIR Applications of AI, 2024 [1 review]
- **Reviewer**, ACM Designing Interactive Systems (DIS) 2023 [1 review]

- Tech Vetter, MIT Solve Global Learning Challenge, 2024
- Workshops and Outreach, App Inventor Foundation
- Founder and President, UNICEF @ Georgia Tech, 2018-2022
- Executive Project Lead, CS + Social Good @ Georgia Tech, 2019-2022
- Training Manager, Robogals @ Georgia Tech, 2019-2020

## TEACHING

Designed curricula and co-led instruction for the following courses:

Instructor	<b>6.S062 Generative Artificial Intelligence In K-12 Education</b> Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Fall 2023. Enrollment: MIT & Harvard graduate and undergraduate students
Instructor	<b>MAS.SX Text-to-Image Generation for K-12 Education</b> Massachusetts Institute of Technology, IAP 2023. Enrollment: MIT & Harvard graduate and undergraduate students, MIT staff
Instructor	<b>Impact and Application of Generative Artificial Intelligence within Education (Module on Text-to-image Generation)</b> IEEE Education Society hosted by Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Fall 2023 Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)
Head Teaching Assistant	<b>CS 1331 Introduction to Object Oriented Programming</b> Georgia Institute of Technology, Spring 2019 – Fall 2021. Enrollment: GT undergraduate students
Curriculum Developer	<b>Environmental Data Collection and Analysis using Micro:bits</b> Day of AI, 2024. Enrollment: Middle and high school teachers & students
Instructor + Curriculum Developer	<b>Data Science and AI with Micro:bits and MIT App Inventor</b> MIT Futuremakers Program 2024 Enrollment: Middle and high school students
Instructor	<b>Human Centered Design</b> Code.X, Summer 2021. Enrollment: Middle and high school students

## SELECTED TALKS

- **Democratizing K12 Data Science Education through Student-Centered Interdisciplinary Curricula**  
Speaker at [UNESCO's Digital Learning Week 2024](#), held at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris
- **The Future of Generative AI in Higher Education**  
Guest speaker at 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of Louisiana Colleges & Universities (CLCU) 2024
- **How Might We Redefine Learning in the Age of AI?**  
Guest speaker and panelist, Center for Constructive Communication (CCC), MIT Media Lab
- **AI is for Everyone: Transforming K-12 Learning and Education in the Era of AI**  
Center of Excellence in Teacher Education (CETE) at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, India
- **PopSign: Mobile Games to teach Sign Language**  
Imagine RIT 2022, Rochester, NY