

# EXAMINING THE IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON LIBRARY MAKERSPACES AND LIS MAKERSPACE CURRICULA

Dr. Marijel (Maggie) Melo, Dr. Kimberly Hirsh & Laura March

Equity in the Making Lab | Project funded by NSF Award # 1942930

# SPEAKERS

EiTM: Equity in the Making Lab: [eitm.unc.edu](http://eitm.unc.edu)



**Dr. Marijel (Maggie) Melo**  
Director & Assistant Professor



**Dr. Kimberly Hirsh**  
Consultant

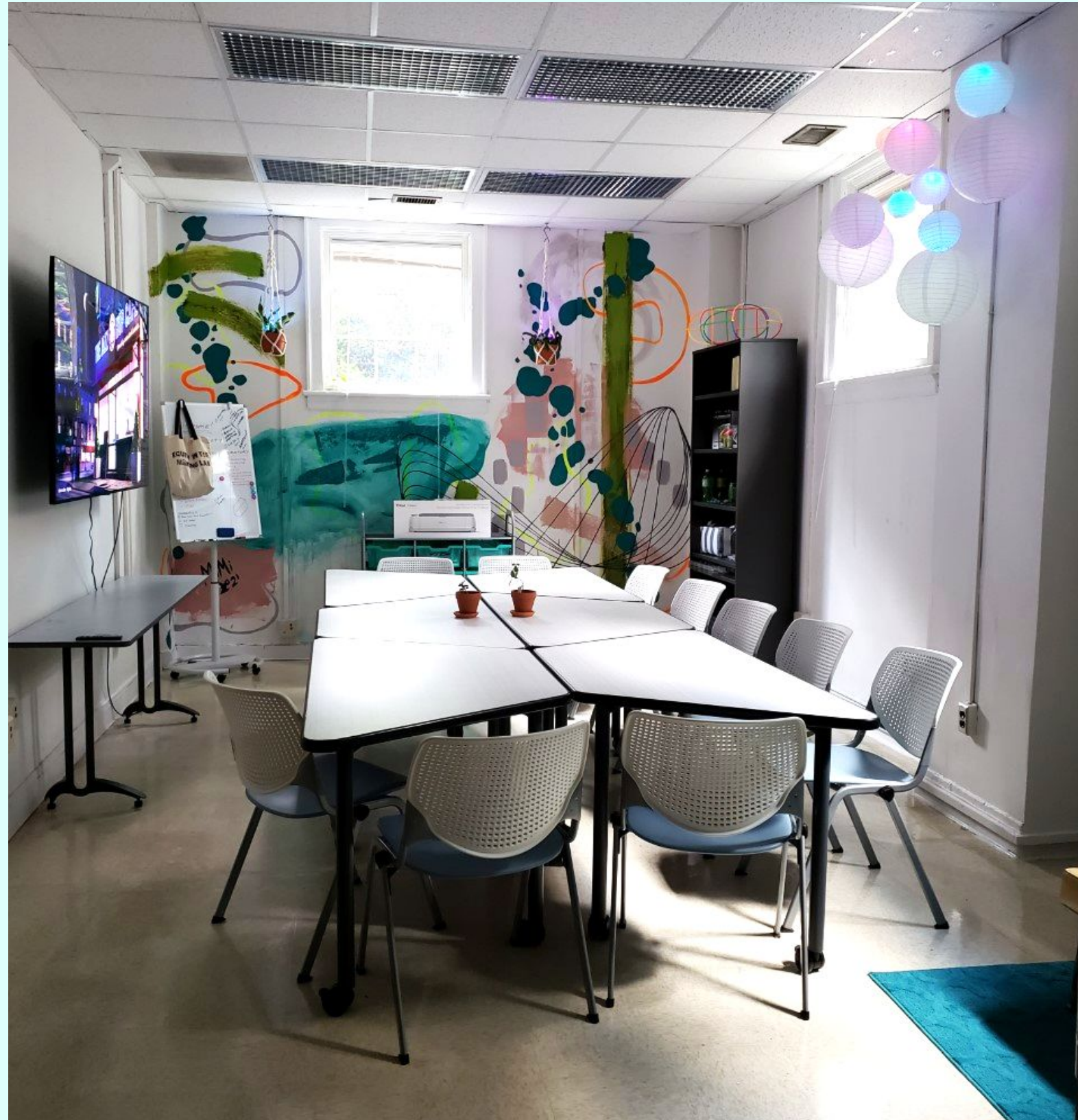


**Laura March, MS, MEd**  
Research Assistant

# BACKGROUND

## Overview of EiTM

The EITM Lab conducts research at the intersection of critical making, inclusion and equity, and information behavior. Led by Dr. Maggie Melo, the EITM Lab develops open-source materials and open-access research for educators, community organizers, and information professionals.



# INTRODUCTION

## Part 1

# THE PROBLEM

## *Changes in academic library makerspaces*

- Transition to remote instruction and its effects on collaborative learning
- Inaccessibility of services
- Additional emergency services
- Teaching future practitioners without access to makerspaces
- Acknowledging pandemic-related stressors

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

## *“What are the defining features of a makerspace?”*

- How did makerspace leadership in higher education adapt their services in response to safety protocols and the holistic needs of their user communities?
- What was the pandemic’s impact on LIS makerspace course curricula as it transitioned from face-to-face to virtual instruction?

# OBJECTIVES

*What we want to achieve*

- Examine the efforts of university makerspace leaders in North Carolina in response to the first six months of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Uncover what and who are involved in the design of makerspaces and the rationale underlying these design decisions.
- Learn to what extent the spatial organization of a makerspace bears on whether underrepresented undergraduate communities decide to use their university's makerspace and what design interventions are needed to spatially communicate that a makerspace is equitable and inclusive.

# SIGNIFICANCE

## In terms of scope

### Theory Development

Defining features of makerspaces

### Practice » Education

Incorporation of findings into case study

## In terms of resources

NSF Grant

Graduate Assistantships

Access to Makerspace Leaders

## In terms of time

**Phase 1: 2020-2021**

Data Collection & Analysis

**Phases 2-4: 2021-2024**

VR & Pilot

# METHODS

## Part 2



# OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODS

## STEP 1

Drew on grounded theory techniques using data from semi-structured interviews conducted in fall 2020 with 15 makerspace leaders from North Carolina state universities & 2 from an earlier study..



## STEP 2

Preliminary findings from interviews related to COVID-19 challenges and opportunities guided case study of spring 2021 graduate-level makerspace course.

# RESULTS

## Part 3

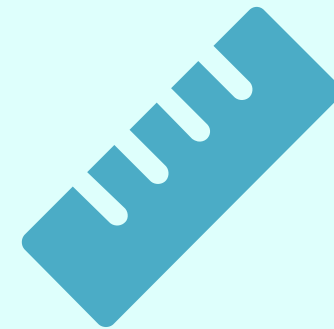
# INTERVIEWS

## *Preliminary findings*



### HIGHLIGHT 1

Decreasing user attendance or completely halting in-person use of the makerspace.



### HIGHLIGHT 2

Spacing out equipment and/or integrating a reservation system to control the number of users in the space.



### HIGHLIGHT 3

Developing programming outside of the space that can be done safely in the user's home.



The impacts of COVID-19 on course curriculum was not isolated to assignments and learning objectives, but also influenced the morale and safety of students. Like the adaptations of library makerspace information professionals, I pared down the learning outcomes of their makerspace course to two main themes: adaptability and connection.

# ADAPTABILITY

Adaptability was both a core value and a coping mechanism for the students and instructor to navigate a semester under the duress of uncertainty and fear.

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# CONNECTION

Connection, a fundamental value of maker culture, served as a framework to design classroom experiences for meaningful and authentic engagement with colleagues

# CONCLUSION

## Part 4

# ARTICULATION OF KEY VALUES

*A makerspace without face-to-face collaborative learning?*



# THANK YOU

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[eitm.unc.edu](http://eitm.unc.edu)