MAKER ED

2019 ANNUAL REPORT
From textiles to tinkering, coding to cooking, sewing to soldering, if you can imagine it, somewhere, somehow, a learner is bringing it to life.

After all, we are born to create. To build. To make.
To find the limits of what’s possible. And venture beyond them.
It’s in these learning-for-life moments where the future unfolds.
Where the next generation takes its shape.

As twenty-first century educators, it’s our shared responsibility to bend the arc of learning towards its most important stakeholders: learners.
To keep learning textured, meaningful, and diverse.
To offer our learners pathways to greater equity, agency, adaptability, and resilience.

That’s why, at Maker Ed, we support a powerful community of maker educators who harness the potential of human-centered learning.
In 2019, Maker Ed further grounded our work in the shared values of educators around the country in service to the 50 million young people who engage in the promise of an education every day. We see educators bringing joy to their spaces. They seek strength in community. They want productive and inclusive discussion. They strive for equity and they need support. We believe that educators are the most critical drivers for change in our educational institutions, and that is why we focus on the professional learning of educators in schools, libraries, museums, and universities nationally.

Maker Ed sparked to life in May of 2012, and while we have evolved at an ambitious pace, we remain as committed as ever to the values of collaboration, joy, agency, equity, and learning. Maker education has grown significantly from its initial efforts as a grassroots cause to a movement of stakeholders at all levels rethinking traditional schooling methods to remake teaching and learning. In 2019, we supported localized educational institutions through networked professional development, community engagement, and capacity building; we connected these regional institutions to a dynamic national network; we launched a suite of online and in-person professional learning opportunities; and we convened educators to push our collective work ever forward.

We also spent time building a strategy for the sustained growth of our organization. After eight years of program development and delivery, we are excited to create a comprehensive programmatic and partnership effort to strengthen and scale maker education nationally. We have set in motion a bold five-year endeavor to ensure 50 robust and active regional hubs across the nation, connected to a Maker Education Network of practitioners sharing pedagogy, research, and best practices aligned with policy goals across the country.

To drive the change we seek, we are intensely focused in three core areas: deepening the practice, strengthening the field, and sustaining our work. In our efforts to connect, fortify, and validate a movement for maker education to shift teaching and learning, we know that local collaboration matters as much as national alignment. On a regional and national scale, we will continue to provide a comprehensive suite of training and support for maker educators on the ground. All of this is possible so long as we also work to ensure Maker Ed is a secure, sustainable 501c3 that embodies our organizational values.

WE’RE MOBILIZING EDUCATORS AROUND THE COUNTRY

We believe in a future where every child—regardless of race, gender, place, or class—gets the education they need to thrive. We’re mobilizing educators around the country to ensure a vibrant, accessible educational environment that sets each learner up for success.

As you read our reflections on 2019, I hope you’ll see the signs that we’re becoming ever more accountable to students and our stakeholders. We work for our nation’s kids, and they deserve our best. Thanks for believing in us. I hope you’ll be in touch with ways you think we can build a stronger Maker Ed.

Warmly,

Kyle Cornforth
Executive Director, Maker Education Initiative
As we work to harness the potential of making to transform teaching and learning, we do so by pushing on one (or many) levers at a time, or strategic areas of work. The goals of our organization are:

**01: DEEPENING THE PRACTICE**
To provide a comprehensive suite of training and support for maker education nationally.

**02: STRENGTHENING THE FIELD**
To connect, fortify, and validate a movement for maker education to shift teaching and learning.

**03: SUSTAINING THE WORK**
To ensure Maker Ed is a secure, sustainable 501c3 that embodies our organizational values of, “learning, agency, community, equity, and joy”

By organizing and pursuing our goals in this way, we’re making transparent our intentions and ensuring that the efforts are comprehensive and balanced. In this report, we’ve identified the ways in which our day-to-day projects and programs in 2019 support the overlapping strategic areas of work. Every accomplishment named in this report influences more than one goal at once, so we’ve used these icons to show the interconnectedness. Read on to see how we’ve made lasting and significant impact on educators across the country!
DEEPENING THE PRACTICE

PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE SUITE OF TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR MAKER EDUCATION NATIONALLY. IN 2019, MAKER ED:

- Offered professional development workshops at our community studio in Berkeley, and took them on the road for the first time;
- Improved our online offerings to provide free, original resources for educators, accessible anywhere at any time;
- Hosted our inaugural Maker Ed Summer Institute, a five-day immersion in implementing and sustaining maker centered learning;
- Continued with Making Spaces, our regional Hub and Site support model, graduating Cohort 2, sustaining Cohort 3 and announcing Cohort 4.

ON A REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SCALE, WE PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE SUITE OF TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR MAKER EDUCATORS ON THE GROUND.
In 2019, we developed three workshops: Approaches to Maker Education, Documenting for Assessment, and Designing Learning Progressions. We aim to create spaces for educators to both actively participate and be reflective, and we hope everyone leaves with a prototype or plan for moving their work forward (whether they end up with an activity, assessment, or progression built specifically for their learning environments).

We hosted five sessions in Berkeley and one in Houston, TX at BakerRipley, the home of FabLab Houston. Attendance numbered from eight educators to upwards of 15, and throughout the year, we engaged with 50 educators from 32 distinct institutions. Based on numbers at our disposal, we estimate 3,750 learners had potential to interact with educators who participated in our workshops.

**EDUCATORS OF ALL KINDS ARE REPRESENTED IN OUR WORKSHOPS:**

- from classroom, after school, library, museum learning environments;
- from just starting out to deeply familiar with making;
- from direct implementation to district-wide leadership roles;
- many classroom educators coming from Title I schools, schools serving youth from low-income families or emergent bilingual youth; and
- serving youth of all ages, from K-12, community colleges and higher education.

“STUDENTS ACTUALLY LEARNED, A NEW DEFINITION OF ASSESSMENT AND PROJECTS THAT GOT ME THINKING OF HOW I LEARN. I FELT THIS WAS A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT WHERE WE COULD HONESTLY SAY WHAT WE FELT AND WHAT WE WERE CONFUSED ABOUT. IT WAS A SPACE TO LEARN.”

Documenting for Assessment Workshop participant, Berkeley, CA, Nov. ’19

“VERY HELPFUL, INFORMATIVE, AND WELL-DESIGNED WORKSHOP. I THINK I AM ALIGNED WITH MANY OF THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES BEHIND MAKING, SO I ENJOYED IT IMMENSELY. IT IS A GREAT WORKSHOP FOR EDUCATORS NEW TO MAKING, SUCH AS MYSELF.”

Approaches to Maker Education workshop participant, Houston, TX, Dec. ’19
Maker Ed develops free, original resources for educators, accessible online for educators in all sorts of environments at any stage of their development in maker education. These resources support educators in taking next steps in their practice, whether that is creating maker-centered curriculum, building out programs for maker education, or connecting with the field more broadly.

In 2019, Maker Ed debuted a brand new suite of in-person professional learning experiences centered on activity design and curricular integration, documentation and assessment, and learning progressions. In parallel, Maker Ed developed stand-alone resources in conversation with workshop content, translating Maker Ed’s in-person support into free and easily accessible, online support.

These resources offer clear formulations of approaches to curricular integration as well as adaptable templates for planning.

Resources that reflect our workshop goals include:

- **APPROACHES TO MAKER EDUCATION**
- **DOCUMENTATION PROMPT JAR**
- **PLANNING PACKET: DESIGNING LEARNING PROGRESSIONS**

Maker Ed also published a new online learning module - Building a Maker-Centered Pathway to Invention - to support educators to design rich learning progressions thematized around invention.

As an example, here’s a look at the Online Learning page of our site, and the new “Building a Maker-Centered Pathway to Invention” resource, which outlines the Approaches to Maker Education.

**APPROACHES TO MAKER EDUCATION**

**WHAT IS MAKER EDUCATION?**

We define making simply and openly: Making is hands-on and learner-driven.

- **Hands-on**: It involves encounters with physical, digital, or virtual tools and materials. This open definition allows you to include making in many varieties of media and activities (such as gardening, coding, and physical computing).
- **Learner-driven**: Learners define and drive their own learning and do so in a variety of ways. They make meaning out of their experience and learning, they determine their path into learning, and they set their own goals along their path. Even in formal education environments, where educators set long-term learning goals for their learners, learners nevertheless have the opportunity to figure things out on their own.

**APPROACHES AND GOALS**

Making can support learning in many ways. Here we focus on three of the most common:

The goals you set for your learners can relate to academic content knowledge (e.g., ratios in math), a particular set of skills (e.g., pattern recognition or soldering), or a mindset (e.g., problem solving or critical thinking). Making has the power to support all of these types of learning simultaneously, in a single activity, whether that is a lesson in school, a drop-in experience in a museum, or a self-directed learning module online.

This resource offers three approaches to integrating making and learning. Each approach aids you in designing for different types of learning, and together the approaches can support you in planning robust sequences or progressions of learning that build on one another—all while activating the multi-faceted potential of making.

- **TINKER TO DISCOVER**
- **MAKE TO LEARN**
- **APPLICATION PROJECT**

**What Tools and Materials are Making?**

Activities are diverse as making, electronics, cooking, and physical computing all offer opportunities to learners to explore, discover, create, and apply ideas. This section will guide you in determining which tools and materials you will use for your learning. Each activity has a set of materials and instructions that align with the learning goals that you set for your learners, and with the questions or challenges you pose.

**Structure and Scaffolds**

While planning any activity, you will set short- and long-term learning goals and create structures, scaffolds, and supports for your learners. The approaches aid you in determining who sets learning goals and how you incorporate a process of scaffolding or invite your learners into an activity, how you deliver instructions and/or tasks (whether written, verbal, or both), and what scaffolds you supply.

**Facilitation**

As your learners make and learn, you will facilitate their learning in the moment, by circulating the room, observing learners in activity, and making interventions. All of these approaches share a common framework for facilitating learning—though they address how, when, and where, and how you might intervene or provide scaffolding to support their development. Each approach offers three different opportunities to document and assess learning.

**Looking for Signs of Learning**

The interactive and hands-on nature of making can support many forms of learning. You will observe your learners capture and record their learning experiences. Each approach offers three opportunities to reflect on the traces of learning that are evident and growing.

**Progression and Sequences of Learning**

All learning experiences build on, and integrate with, other experiences. Whether individual activity or lesson, you consider what you hope and expect your learners will bring with them into your activity or lesson, as well as what you want your learners to go next.

**Tools and Materials of Making**

The variety of tools and materials of making are wide ranging. Each approach offers a different opportunity to explore, discover, create, and apply ideas. These resources support educators in taking next steps in their practice, whether that is creating maker-centered curriculum, building out programs for maker education, or connecting with the field more broadly.
In June of 2019, we hosted 30 people from 14 organizations at our then-new community studio for a 5 day-long learning experience. Participants from all over the country attended, and chose a strand (curriculum development, assessment, or program development) of the Institute on which to focus. We facilitated joint threads that covered equity and sustainability, as well.

Each participant was asked to identify a challenge in their work, and spent the week engaged with that challenge through the lens of maker-centered activities. Through the various threads and strands of the Institute, they were given the open-ended space for ideation, wearing their educator hats and their learner hats in equal measure (sometimes at the same moment!).

The sense of community was incredible, with bonds having been forged among educators, and with Maker Ed—one participating school will host a workshop in their community in another state, and we have the opportunity to work with other attendees in an extended learning pathway for their faculty.

**HERE’S WHAT SUMMER INSTITUTE ATTENDEES SAID ABOUT OUR FIRST YEAR:**

- “The most powerful thing about this Institute was having an open group of people from all around the country willing to collaborate to create ideas to improve Maker education in a variety of ways in a very safe space.”
- “The Institute provided insights of creating an environment where all learners can thrive and to think differently.”
- “This is an empowering, thoughtful week to examine your own practice, collaborate with other educators in authentic ways, and challenge you to think beyond the small world you live in.”
- “I learned so much and have a much better language to connect to what we are already doing at my school.”
STRENGTHENING THE FIELD

_CONNECT, FORTIFY, AND VALIDATE A MOVEMENT FOR MAKER EDUCATION TO SHIFT TEACHING AND LEARNING. IN 2019, MAKER ED:

- pushed the field’s work and understanding of how and what knowledge is valued for educators and learners;
- pursued opportunities to advocate for institutional integration of maker education through our network; and
- took steps to build an interactive, online community of practice for maker educators nationwide.

Here are some of the ways we’ve been working to advance this field.

IMLS NAT’L FORUM AND WHITE PAPER

With the generous support of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Maker Ed were delighted to bring together leaders in maker-centered learning to review and distill current research relevant to maker-based learning experiences in libraries, identify gaps, and communicate the research in a way to be useful for library practice. The result was deeper and shared understanding, as well as a white paper, “Opportunities and Vignettes for Library Makerspaces,” which we published on our online Resource Library.

The white paper serves as a guide to library professionals, researchers, and maker educators to approach challenges they face with creative thinking. It contains shared definitions, considerations, demonstrated value and recommendations for the future of the field. These insights will inform new directions for making in libraries and identify areas ripe for future research that will increase the momentum and deepen the impact of maker-centered learning, specifically in library services, and leverage new opportunities for collaboration and work.

“OPPORTUNITY BUILT INTO THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS IS SUPPORT FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS TO DEVELOP MAKER ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS, SHOWCASING THE VALUE OF DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS ALONGSIDE CORE CONTENT KNOWLEDGE.”

– Opportunities and Vignettes for Library Makerspaces, 2019
MAKING SPACES

The Making Spaces Program is a 30-month professional learning and capacity building program designed to support local leadership around maker education and build the foundation for lasting, embedded change in three core areas: pedagogy, community, and culture, with an emphasis on sustainability + growth.

The program continues to evolve and support organizations across the country help their regions grow maker-centered learning in schools and libraries. In 2019 we refined our model of support into a carefully paced 30-month engagement aimed at achieving better alignment with our goals and intended outcomes. Our goals are to support local leadership around maker education and build the foundation for lasting, embedded change in three core areas: pedagogy, community, and culture, with an emphasis on sustainability and growth. In 2019, we issued an open call for applications to Cohort 4, and were overwhelmed by the response. With deeply meaningful sponsorship from Cognizant, we accepted 10 Hubs, bringing the total number of Hubs to 31. Since 2016, the Making Spaces program has engaged around 200 schools, serving 350 educators, and impacted an estimated 26,000 youth.
MAKING SPACES

IMPACT OF MAKING SPACES

PEDAGOGY
Creative structures to shift educator practice (skill, knowledge, attitude, belief) and improve student learning.

CULTURE
Cultivate shared language, values, and vision to support maker-centered learning.

COMMUNITY
Grow their community of support for maker-centered learning to build leadership and legitimately within the ecosystem.
MAKER EDUCATION MEETUPS

Maker Educator Meetups (MEMs) are free, in-person, informal gatherings of educators who are focused on hands-on, learner-driven, maker-centered education. In late summer 2019, Maker Ed began hosting educators in our community studio for an evening of making, learning and sharing every other month. Meetups occur all over the country, and we’re excited to be part of a grassroots network which connects us to our local colleagues. Educators from a variety of learning institutions attend MEMs - from classrooms to libraries to museums to makerspaces/fab labs, etc - educators that teach all age ranges and content areas.

EQUITY: Support all types of educators from different learning environments to implement and sustain maker centered learning especially those serving low-income and historically marginalized students

COMMUNITY: Build a collaborative community network of maker educators by offering opportunities for educators to share stories, activities, experiences, resources, and inspiration

LEARNING: Provide (and receive) ongoing support by building a community of educators and a space to share opportunities for those interested in making; to foster agency and maker empowerment in educators themselves

We feel so fortunate to have the chance to provide a welcoming space to all educators - educators with different viewpoints, experiences, diverse culture perspectives.

BEYOND RUBRICS

Traditional assessment methods aren’t suited to capture the open-ended, collaborative, cross-disciplinary, iterative, and dynamic nature of maker-centered learning or projects. The MIT Playful Journey Lab and Maker Ed designed Beyond Rubrics: Moving Towards Embedded Assessment in Maker Education to investigate and co-design embedded assessment tools and strategies for maker learning environments. Between late 2017 and mid-2019, the joint research team worked with two U.S. middle schools of differing approaches to their teaching and learning to gather rigorous evidence of process-oriented, social, and exploratory student learning.

The resulting toolkit is intentionally low-tech and meant to be integrated directly into classroom lessons and units. It’s designed to enable students and teachers, as well as parents and administrators, to develop a shared understanding of assessment, everything from what skills are important to what evidence of learning can be collected.

The entire toolkit, including supporting documentation, teacher guides, customizable files, and background information, are available for free download at makered.org/beyondrubrics
Our Maker Educator Convening (MEC) was held on October 12-13, 2019 in Pittsburgh, PA at Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh (CMP), MuseumLab, and nearby venues. This was the first time Maker Ed hosted the event outside of the Bay Area, and we were delighted to welcome both new and familiar faces to the community! We’re grateful to attendees, our keynote speakers and session facilitators, our community of supporters and our hosts at CMP for helping us to bring this exciting gathering to the east coast.

As the theme of this year’s Convening, equity, access and sustainability were prioritized as session topics throughout the weekend-long agenda. Our RFP process favored first-time facilitators, and those who showed an innovative, inclusive conception of making. Our opening keynote speakers Sunanna Chand and Dr. Valerie Kinloch invited participants to consider a definition of making that might consist of 3D-printing, circuits AND cultural traditions of the indigenous and displaced people of this continent, for example. During Sunday keynotes, Erica Halverson asked us to consider equity in rural America and Michelle King challenged us all to include in our ideas of making the possibility that we are all makers when we make meaning in our lives.

“I left thinking more about how making impacts identity differently depending on the context (e.g. rural vs. urban), how critical it is to examine whether our programs are equitable,...and to use maker ed as another tool to create more access,” reported one participant in their post-Convening survey.

We welcomed 241 attendees from 31 states and 3 countries.

Approximately 39% of attendees work in a school or school district, and others represented a mix of institutions like museums, libraries, universities, non-profits, etc.

53% of our attendees are veteran educators (people with more than 10 years of experience as an educator), while about 40% of our attendees report that they are in their first decade of teaching. 78.8% of survey respondents were first-time attendees at our Convening.

With 117 presenters leading 61 sessions, including workshops, keynotes, presentations, Ignite Talks, and a phenomenal finale at the PLAYnary, the 2-day agenda was our most robust to-date.

Our Convening post-survey results have been both affirming and revealing. 100% of respondents say that the Convening provoked their thinking, and their comments represent the broad range of reactions.

See our Convening recap page for selected, anonymous excerpts and a roll-up of the activity on Twitter.
5TH ANNUAL MAKER EDUCATOR CONVENING

SOME SESSIONS FOCUSED ON THEMES OF EQUITY, ACCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY INCLUDED:

- The Learner or the System: Let’s Reimagine “What School is For”
- Making with Head, Hands, and Heart
- Making is How We Learn: Building MakerCulture in Public Education
- Making Accessibility
- Distributed Leadership as a Path to Making
- Mindset For Maker: Access For All Students
- Constructing Knowledge: Learners Defining Learning

New this year was the world premier of the PLAYnary, a 24-hour playwriting challenge, in which 17 attendees worked with professional actors to craft sketches to highlight tensions and opportunities for equity in learning environments.

Special thanks for Jessica Mele of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Marc Chun of the Overdeck Family Foundation for their facilitation and leadership of this activity.
SUSTAINING THE WORK

ENSURE MAKER ED IS A SECURE, SUSTAINABLE 501C3 THAT EMBODIES OUR ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES. IN 2019, MAKER ED LAID THE GROUND WORK TO:

• develop a dynamic and intentional programmatic and funding partnership structure;
• prioritize diversity in perspectives and experiences, and make decisions informed directly by our stated values; and
• create and refine our systems, tools, and use of space to effectively meet all the needs of the organization.

To that end, we want to acknowledge the work that goes on behind the scenes that makes us a stronger resource for our community.

“Few (if any) work harder than educators at improving their own craft and pushing themselves to embody their values in their work. Maker Ed is an essential resource for these powerful professionals and also for their communities to create equitable and innovative learning environments that are accessible to all of their learners. We’ve been so grateful to partner with Maker Ed and look forward to what’s ahead.” – Gregg Behr, The Grable Foundation

MAKER ED STAFF

In our first full year at our new community studio in Berkeley, CA, we’re a joyful and creative team of nine staff members! We bid a bittersweet farewell to Director of Partnerships and Development, Jakki Spicer, who relocated to beautiful Scotland in June 2019. Thank you, Jakki, for years of service! We welcomed Linda Le in April as our Office and Events coordinator, and in June, we added Dora Medrano Ramos as a new Lead Maker Trainer, and Aubrey Mailliard Rawlins as Director of Partnerships and Development.

OUR ROBUST ROSTER IS NOW:

JUSTIN BONER, Lead Maker Trainer
STEPHANIE CHANG, Director of Impact
KYLE CORNFORTH, Executive Director
LINDA LE, Office and Events Coordinator
DORA MEDRANO RAMOS, Lead Maker Trainer
LAUREN PENNEY, Making Spaces Program Manager
AUBREY MAILLIARD RAWLINS, Director of Partnerships and Development
KEYANA STEVENS, Community Manager
AARON VANDERWERFF, Director of Learning
We’re so grateful for the leadership and support of our board of directors. In a year that required diligence and creativity, we could not have asked for a more thoughtful and generous team of experts to guide us. We’re grateful to Jay Silver of Makey Makey for his many years of service as he transitioned off this year, and are thrilled to welcome Robin Baskin-McNulty, who brings her experience as an educator and an innovator to round out our board of ten.

**OUR BOARD IS NOW:**
ROBIN BASKIN-MCNULTY
KIPP BRADFORD
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DALE DOUGHERTY
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PAM MORAN
KATHRYN NASH (TREASURER)
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The tremendous generosity of our institutional partners continues to humble and motivate us. Thank you to the organizations who have shown their support for this work.

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We’re overwhelmed by the community of support who have contributed to this work through Humble Bundle. With every purchase of Make:Community electronic content through their platform, Humble Bundle users are asked to opt-in at a dollar amount of their choosing to donate to Maker Ed. To date, Humble Bundle customers have contributed over $1M to our work.

THANK YOU TO KELLEY ALLEN, DANA WILLIAMS AND EVERYONE AT HUMBLE BUNDLE FOR MAKING THIS HAPPEN.

OUR SUPPORTERS

We couldn’t do this work without the contributions of individuals across the country. We’re particularly grateful that our board participated 100% in our annual giving endeavors.

AARON ACKERMANN AND LIZA SIEGLER
MIRIAM AND AJA AGUIRRE
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We also know that, with our program partners and contributors, we are better equipped to make lasting change. Thank you to everyone who has participated in this work with us!

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