

APPLICATION FORM

Seed Grant Proposal Cover Sheet

MAPC

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Bradley D. Olson

Spencer Smith

Signature(s) of CPSA Dean/NCE Dean

**2021 Seed Grant
Proposal Outline Form**

I. Proposal Title

Multimodal Meaning-Making in Academia for Powerful Communication Project (MAPC)

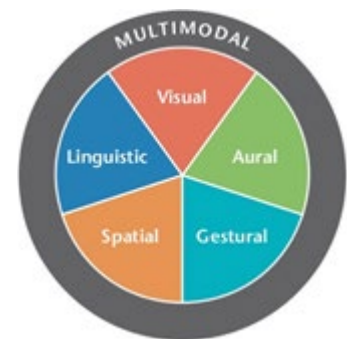
II. Abstract Paragraph of Project (200 words maximum)

Multimodal Meaning-Making in Academia for Powerful Communication Project (MAPC) seeks to innovate new ways to create, represent, and disseminate research-based knowledge through research and experimentation with two interlinked strategies: Multi-modal dissertations and Writing Support Groups. The research team will carry out three linked mini-studies: 1) a canvas of ways in which higher education institutions support sociolinguistic justice via research and practice, 2) the validation of a tool to measure faculty and student conceptions of writing, and 3) experimentation with assessing the influence of various writing groups. The outcomes will include the establishment of an affinity group with internal and external members, a convening hosted by NLU, and recommendations for NLU practice.

Introduction: We are faculty members and an administrator from CPSA, NCE, and the Provost's Office with expertise in engaged research, community psychology, and applied linguistics. NLU's updated and expanded core value of *innovation*, in particular its call to "**refuse to be bound by existing structures or traditional thinking**", inspires us. The proposed project seeks to innovate new ways to create, represent, and disseminate research-based knowledge by creating the Multimodal Meaning-Making in Academia for Powerful Communication Project -- MAPC (pronounced 'maps'). The expanding use of information and communication technologies is redefining how we acquire and share knowledge (Nouri, 2018). In higher education, this presents the opportunity to explore and grow our understanding of research and the ways we communicate and present academic work (Tran, 2019). MAPC proposes to dive into this opportunity through research and experimentation with two interlinked strategies: Multi-modal dissertations and Writing Support Groups.

Rationale: Multimodal meaning-making views literacy as communication that is variable and contextual, and draws from multiple semiotic systems, including the modalities shown in the chart. A multimodal dissertation employs multiple avenues to communicate research. For example, multimodal dissertations have included the incorporation of music, graphic novels, and substantial imagery (See compilation of dissertation examples by Tran, 2019). Additional explanation of the concept is provided in this video (Estima, 2020) <https://tinyurl.com/2tf5j6ce>.

A multimodal approach to research practice and communication is an avenue to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion. Teaching, and using multiple modalities expands "the field of play for students with different learning styles and different ways of reflecting on the world" (Selfe, 2009 p. 644) and makes visible students' resources that are not valued (Archer, 2006). Medina's (2018) scholarship and pedagogy on digital Latinx storytelling is an example showing that multimodal composing can "underscore how orality and aurality offer potential for communities of color with long oral traditions that often include storytelling." Medina has also demonstrated that Latinx scholars have created decolonial knowledge with blogs. Awareness of multiple modalities facilitates the recognition of diverse epistemologies in which knowledge is created and represented in an array of modes, e.g. texts, images, ceremonies (Hall & Tandon, 2017). Medina (2018) advocated for a Latinx digital writing practice "that makes use of the different semiotic affordances of multimodal communication in online environments, and...embodies a resistant ethos in an academic space to engage with issues of race, class, gender, and disability". Selfe described the goal of "develop[ing] an increasingly thoughtful understanding of a whole range of modalities and semiotic resources...to (develop) expertise with all available means of persuasion and expression...in order to function as literate citizens.



Writing groups can play a pivotal role in supporting multimodality in academic work. A growing feature of college campuses, the groups facilitate dialogue about writing among students and faculty, and often provide feedback outside dominant models of teaching writing (Gherardi, Gurisla, & Tafoya, 2020; Taylor et al., 2003). The groups can support techniques and solutions toward more sociolinguistic justice within writing instruction utilizing multiple modalities. For example, interventions that have incorporated the African-American verbal tradition have improved writing (Williams, 2013). Utilizing voice recording and transcription devices has been shown to activate the imagination more quickly (Korostyshevskiy, 2018). However, research has shown that the structure of writing groups is essential to their impact. A survey of over 400 teachers of ESL adult learners showed the importance of students and teachers collaborating on equal levels (Fernandez et al., 2017). Other studies have pointed to the importance of peer support (Aitchison & Lee, 2010; Kumar & Aitchison, 2018; Lassig, ILincoln, Dillon, Diezmann, Fox, & Neofa, 2010), developing

community (Roulston, Teitelbaum, Chang, & Butchart, 2016; White & Nonnamaker, 2008), and understanding the emotional impact of doctoral experiences while developing a writer identity (Carlino, 2012; Murphy, McGlynn-Stewart, & Ghafouri, 2014). There is a strong need to further investigate how writing groups can most effectively be a part of changing the dominant discourse on academic communication.

Strategic Importance to NLU: As NLU begins to implement the 2030 strategic plan, Pillar 3: *Living our DEI Values: Building a Culture of Inclusion*, one stream of enactment is institution-wide initiatives related to language and linguistic diversity. Efforts in the **Undergraduate College** include collecting information about the languages students speak, increasing support for English learners, and providing professional development on strategies for teaching English learners. A Multilingual/Multidialectal Learners Affinity Group has designed research projects and begun to provide university-wide professional development. In addition, NLU's CLAVE grant (Collaborating with Latinx Communities to Advance Education) implements several activities to support Latinx and other under-represented **doctoral students**, one of which is writing support focused on ethnic identity. All of these initiatives have begun to raise awareness about the hegemony of the English language, and have provided the NLU community with concepts needed to talk about language, for example, multilingualism, linguistic bias, and translanguaging. Through increasing our capacity for multimodal communication, MAPC will add to the ongoing discourse and knowledge base about serving multilingual learners at NLU. Further, MAPC supports NLU's research innovation and impact by building our capacity for public scholarship. Public scholarship includes all mediums and platforms through which scholars can communicate research results and play a role in shaping public consciousness, political decision-making, and assisting community leaders to engage in critical dialogue that can empower historically marginalized communities. Multi-modality, that is the capacity to communicate research in many forms, is an essential component of public scholarship. MAPS will support the development of our faculty and students' voices as relevant and powerful.

Methodology and Capacity: Ultimately, higher education institutions can play a role in shifting harmful narratives that have shaped the structure and function of our society. We might even argue we have an imperative to do so given the high number of students we serve who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). It is through re-examining routine scholarly practices, within the current technological and social context, that we can innovate in ways to keep higher education relevant, and bring our students' voices in closer dialogue with other ongoing narratives that shape our world (Hall & Tandon, 2017). In order to influence such community systems, the members of the affinity group examine these questions at multiple levels in the university: institutional practices and opportunities, understanding faculty, practices, and knowledge related to writing, and the specific initiative of writing groups.

The four members on this proposal represent views and expertise across NLU colleges and offices, and complementary strengths in research design, analysis and content expertise. Jason Stegemoller is Associate Professor and chair of English as a Second Language and Bilingual Education. He has deep expertise in the concept of translanguaging and has taught academic writing for multilingual students in classrooms and a writing center. He is also the CLAVE Writing Support faculty member working with the Writing Specialist to create an innovative approach to graduate writing development. Tiffeny Jimenez is Associate Professor of Community Psychology with interests in methods of decolonizing higher education institutional contexts (See: <https://tiffenyjimenez.wordpress.com/2020/07/05/a-checklist-for-decolonizing-the-university/>). She is also the CLAVE Collaborative Evaluator and Postdoctoral Mentor interested in co-creating institution-level innovations to support NLU doctoral student leadership using varied forms of scholarship. Brad Olson is Associate Professor of Community Psychology and is focused on a wide variety of human and civil rights issues, advocacy and activism, participatory action research, and mixed quantitative and qualitative methodologies, ethics, and philosophy of science. Shaunti

Knauth is Director of Engaged Research at NLU and a member of the Provost's Office. She has research and practice interests focused on engagement in productive work across multiple contexts, and recently led the initiation of a virtual accountability and support space for all writers at NLU. During the one-year grant period, the MAPC team will carry out three linked mini-studies to address three overarching research questions:

1. How does valuing multi-modal scholarship influence institutional practices, supports, and philosophy of scholarship?
2. How does the use of multi-modalities impact writing and research?
3. What supports faculty and doctoral students in using multiple modalities in carrying out and communicating their research?

Specific team members will lead each of the studies, meet biweekly, and will support data analysis in each study.

Study 1: Institutional Practices and Opportunities. Tiffeny Jimenez will lead this study. Applying the lens of socio-linguistic justice, the study approach is to survey the field to learn about current practice and research using multi-modal scholarship.

Study 1 - Research Questions:

1. How are universities putting into practice interventions to address sociolinguistic justice across their institutions? How is multi-modality being applied?
2. Who are the main scholars writing about multi-modality as a form of sociolinguistic justice?
3. What are the main learnings on this issue to be taken into consideration at NLU, particularly in relation to public scholarship, institutional resources, writing supports, and multimodal dissertation options?
4. How can we use arguments about sociolinguistic justice to argue for how to work towards liberating the canon?

Study 1 - Methods:

- *Literature review:* The study will begin with a full literature review on multi-modality research. Dr. Jimenez will carry out this review, building on the extensive bibliography compiled by the seed grant team. This grant seeks to understand how we can bridge the multilingual diversity of students with diverse platforms that allow their voices to shape community narratives, referred to here as public scholarship. Public scholarship is about reaching a broader audience to shape the local contextual community systems in which we live. Public scholarship includes all mediums where students can play a role in shaping public consciousness, political decision-making, and assist community leaders to engage in critical dialogue that can empower historically marginalized communities. One way to think about this is through engagement with the mass media outlets, which include: interviews with newspapers, magazines, blogs, and all print that reach larger audiences beyond scholarly outlets, including radio, podcasts, art shows, and television or online video spaces. The review will result in a white paper and the identification of researchers, institutions and individuals who are leading in this field.
- *Convening the field:* The results of the review will be used to create a one-day conference that invites external and NLU researchers and practitioners to discuss their work and their thoughts on next steps and directions for expanding multi-modality. We expect that the invitees will include faculty, institutional representatives such as deans or research directors, and doctoral students. Two forms of data will result from the convening: 1) field notes on speakers and discussion, and 2) responses to a participant survey that will be embedded within the day's events. These data will be analyzed by the entire study team to develop a brief, multi-modal convening proceedings. The proceedings will be presented as a web page that will be hosted in the Engaged Research section of the CTLE website. This page will be accessible internally and externally.

- **NLU Dialogue Sessions:** Following the convening, 2-4 dialogue sessions will be created with NLU faculty, admins, and students to consider how we think about ideas from the field, and main points from the convening. Participants will include those who attended the convening, and others who did not attend. The two forms of data resulting from the dialogue sessions will be field notes and participants' closing comments captured through a tool such as padlet. These data will be analyzed by the entire study team to create a set of institution-level recommendations for addressing socio-linguistic justice in NLU research, particularly through multi-modality. These recommendations will be included in the final report, and will be shared through settings such as college meetings, Academic Cabinet, and as a CTLE session.

Study 2: Writing identity in the NLU scholarly community. Jason Stegemoller will lead this study on quantitative measurement of conceptions of writing in the NLU scholarly community. Building our understanding of current views on writing will inform the design of interventions to expand conceptions of knowledge production and sharing. The study is designed as a validation process that will determine whether an extant survey is applicable to our faculty and students.

Study 2 - Research questions:

1. Is the Conceptions of Academic Writing survey (CAW) survey a valid measure of our students' conceptions of writing? If so, how do our students' perceptions compare to those of other groups?
2. Can the CAW survey be used to measure faculty's conceptions of writing?
3. What further questions would help to explore faculty and students' conceptions of writing as multimodal meaning-making?

Study 2 - Methods: The Conceptions of Academic Writing Survey (CAW) is a tool designed to measure perceptions of writing in several key areas: the understanding of 'ability', the role of writing in developing ideas and learning, one's own blocks to writing, and productivity, or seeing oneself as a productive and active agent in the scholarly community. The survey has been validated with students in Spain and Mexico (Cerrato-Lara, Castelló, García-Velázquez & Lonka, 2017). For this study, the survey will be given in an online version to all NLU doctoral students and all faculty teaching graduate students. The survey will be given at the start of the academic year. The results will be validated by Drs. Olson and Jimenez, and will be reviewed by a researcher on the prior CAW validation study. Dr. Stegemoller will lead the team in discussing the results and applying them to developing further questions that explore faculty and students' conceptions of writing as multimodal meaning-making. The testing and validation of the expanded instrument will be incorporated into requests for external funding.

Study 3: Experiences in Writing Groups. Brad Olson and Shaunti Knauth will carry out a study examining student and faculty experiences in writing groups, and the impact of those experiences.

Study 3 - Research Questions:

1. How do participants describe their experience in writing groups in terms of: engagement in writing, participation in a community, and development of communicative capacities?
2. How do experiences differ in varying structures of writing groups?
3. How can writing groups influence a multimodal composing process?

Study 3 - Methods: As with Study 1, the research will begin with a literature review that builds on the extensive bibliography compiled in preparation for this proposal. Dr. Olson and Knauth will carry out further review of current research on writing groups, focusing on methods of data collection and resulting reports of experience and impact. A brief white paper will be prepared.

- Utilizing the paper, Drs. Olson and Knauth will design two data collection tools: a survey, and series of reflection prompts. Data collection will then be carried out in three different writing groups: the NLU Writing Sanctuary, the CLAVE dissertation writing groups, and the CROP Writing Circles. CROP is a group of activist-scholars that discuss and reflect ongoing global

research and praxis ideas in Community Psychology and Community Science in an open, but systematic monthly format. Each of these groups has a different structure in terms of interaction during group time, the level of structure and support provided, and the defined community of participants. At the start of winter quarter in the seed grant year, the survey and reflection tool will be used to gather data in each writing group. The research team will collectively analyze the data. The results will be used to design experimental supports for multi-modality in scholarly work. We expect that these will include strategies for critical examination of the hegemony of current expectations of scholars, examining examples of and practicing with multiple modalities, and deliberately building a shared, rather than hierarchical, writing space inclusive of faculty and students. In the spring term of the seed grant year, we will implement these strategies in two of the writing groups under study, the Writing Sanctuary and the CLAVE support groups. The survey and reflection prompt tools will be used to collect data prior to the intervention, and at the close of the term.

Overall Planned Outcomes:

1. **Preparation for external proposals to continue research.** The completion of the three mini-studies will provide a strong foundation for external proposals to continue the research: Completed literature reviews; a validated tool for measuring impact; and initial findings from a pilot intervention study.
2. **Establishment of an Affinity Group with internal and external members:** Studies 1 and 3 will identify and involve interested practitioners and researchers at NLU and externally. In the year following the seed grant, we will convene an expanded Affinity Group on a quarterly basis, inviting discussion on current work and experiences. We expect that further proposals, projects and convenings will result from this, and will actively work to initiate discussion on such possibilities.
3. **Recommendations for NLU practice:** A final multi-modal report will present findings and implications for NLU in addressing socio-linguistic justice in the doctoral process and in genuinely undertaking public scholarship by students and staff.. With end in mind as we propose this work, our aim is that our recommendations will 1) speak to systemic change that considers institutional perspectives and resources, connections to other initiatives, and 2) integrate the authentic voices of students, faculty and staff.

Sustainability: As described above under outcomes, we expect that the MAPC affinity group will continue and expand. Our plans for applying for external funding are:

The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) – The CCCC has a research initiative. As part of the initiative, CCCC awards up to \$10,000 for research proposals on a variety of topics including writing and identities, and multilingualism. Proposals have generally been due in September for funding beginning in January. Though the amount is small, we believe that an award would allow for further experimentation with designing writing groups to support multi-modal dissertations, and act as a leverage point in further applications for external funding.

Spencer Foundation Field-initiated grants: While fully acknowledging the application long-odds of a Spencer proposal, we will explore the possibility of partnering and proposing with other institutions in the expanded Affinity group. We believe that the literature and initial findings from the Seed Grant period will serve as a steady base for an ambitious proposal. Further, the work as currently conceptualized aligns with the Spencer priorities of *Representing a diversity of scholars and scholarship and contributing to more just learning environments; Engaging multiple voices and disciplinary perspectives and Reaching beyond academic audiences and leading to lasting improvement in education and learning.*

Appendix I
Project Outcomes, Timeline and
Benchmark Measures

Project Outcomes: Preparation for external proposals to continue research. The completion of the three mini-studies will provide a strong foundation for external proposals to continue the research: Completed literature reviews; a validated tool for measuring impact; and initial findings from a pilot intervention study. Establishment of an Affinity Group with internal and external members: Studies 1 and 3 will identify and involve interested practitioners and researchers at NLU and externally. In the year following the seed grant, we will convene an expanded Affinity Group on a quarterly basis, inviting discussion on current work and experiences. We expect that further proposals, projects and convenings will result from this, and will actively work to initiate discussion on such possibilities. Recommendations for NLU practice: A final multi-modal report will present findings and implications for NLU in addressing socio-linguistic justice in the doctoral process and in genuinely undertaking public scholarship by students and staff. With end in mind as we propose this work, our aim is that our recommendations will 1) speak to systemic change that considers institutional perspectives and resources, connections to other initiatives, and 2) integrate the authentic voices of students, faculty and staff.	
Benchmark Activities	Timeline
<u>Study 1: Institutional Practices and Opportunities</u> • Conduct literature review on multi-modality in research <u>Study 2: Writing identity in the NLU scholarly community</u> • Conduct literature review on conceptions of academic writing and how they change to include multiple modalities • Revise conceptions of academic writing (CAW) survey to create the revised CAW (R-CAW) • Create online version of survey • Develop method for recruiting participants • Plan data analysis • Obtain IRB approval <u>Study 3: Experiences in Writing Groups</u> • Conduct literature review on writing groups	Fall 2021

• Draft white paper • Design two data collection tools: a survey, and series of reflection prompts • Obtain IRB approval	
<u>Study 1: Institutional Practices and Opportunities</u> • Draft white paper on multi-modality in research • Plan the NLU Convening on Multi-Modality in Research <u>Study 2: Writing identity in the NLU scholarly community</u> • Administer R-CAW survey • Analyze survey data • Design experimental writing group to cultivate conceptions of academic communication (writing) including multimodal meaning-making <u>Study 3: Experiences in Writing Groups</u> • Gather data in three writing groups using the survey and reflection tool • Analyze survey and reflection data • Design experimental supports for multi-modality in scholarly work	Winter 2022
<u>Study 1: Institutional Practices and Opportunities</u> • Host the NLU Convening on Multi-Modality in Research • Facilitate NLU Dialogues on Multi-Modality in Research <u>Study 2: Writing identity in the NLU scholarly community</u> • Draft white paper • Implement multimodal writing group to cultivate conceptions of academic communication • Administer the R-CAW survey as a pre/post <u>Study 3: Experiences in Writing Groups</u> • Implement multi-modality strategies in two of the writing groups	Spring 2022
<u>Draft proposal for external grant funding</u> • College Conference on Composition and Communication • Spencer Foundation Field-initiated grant	Summer 2022

Appendix II

MAPC Proposal Budget

Proposal Title	Multimodal Meaning-Making in Academia for Powerful Communication Project -- MAPC	
Principal Investigator(s)	Tiffeny Jimenez, Shaunti Knauth, Bradley Olson, Jason Stegemoller	
Additional applicants		
EXPENSES	Y1 Budget: July 1, 2021– June 30, 2022 No Y1 funds will be carried over to Y2	Y2 Budget: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 All Y2 funds must be expended by June 30, 2022.
Personnel – students and/or temp. labor	\$	\$
Communications	\$	\$
Resources (e.g. purchased publications costs)	\$	\$
Travel	\$ 3,000	\$
Incentives for Non-NLU Research Participants	\$	
Supplies	\$	\$

Meeting costs: facilities, other	\$ 1,000	\$
Other: Honorarium for external review of survey validation	\$ 500	\$
Other: Honorarium for external speakers at mini conferences (500 per speaker at 3 speakers)	\$ 1,500	
Other: Cost for team attendance of 2022 Conference of College Communication and Composition: Registration = \$25 for membership and \$195 for conference fee/ 220 * 4 = 880 Per diem = (30 * 3 days) * 4 team members	\$ 1,340	
Total for each Year	\$ 7,340	\$
TOTAL Request (Track 1: not to exceed \$5000. Track 2: not to exceed \$10,000)	\$ 7,340	

Appendix III
MAPC Budget Narrative

Travel: \$3,000. The funding will be applied to the cost of attending the 2022 **International Conference on Multimodal Interaction, being held in London, England in January 2022.** **This conference** aims to bring together academic scientists, researchers and research scholars to exchange and share their experiences and research results on all aspects of Multimodal Interaction. This funding will be distributed among team members with the exception of Shaunti Knauth, to avoid a conflict of interest given her role as administrator in regards to the Seed Grant program.

Meeting costs: \$1,000. This funding will be applied to the costs of refreshments for participants in the convening on multimodality in dissertation and academia, to be hosted by NLU.

Other: Honorarium \$500 for external review of the CAW survey validation results. The review will be by a researcher on a prior CAW validation study

Honorarium: \$1,500. The cost is for honorariums of \$500 for each of three external speakers at the convening on multimodality in dissertation and academia, to be hosted by NLU.

Other: Cost for team attendance of 2022 Conference of College Communication and Composition, being held in Chicago. Registration = \$25 for membership and \$195 for conference fee/ $220 * 4 = 880$ Per diem = $(30 * 3 \text{ days}) * 4 \text{ team members}$

Total cost for MAPC implementation: \$7,340

Appendix IV
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