

## **Filmmakers' Archive**

### **Salomé Lamas**

#### ***Education as practice***

#### ***Practice as research***

#### **Introduction** *(fragments)*

“Reality is not defined by matters of fact. Matters of fact are not all that is given in experience. Matter of fact are only very partial and, I would argue, very polemical, very political renderings of matters of concern and only a subset of what could also be called states of affair.” (Latour 2004: 232)

Approaches to knowledge in education possibly benefit from a network sensibility that foregrounds the negotiated processes through which the material becomes entangled with the social to bring forth actions, subjectivities and ideas. Socio-material approaches to education share analytical perspectives in the sense that they refuse to separate the human dimensions of educational practices from their material dimensions, and rather focus on the relational composition of these practices. These approaches afford a criticality that open necessary entry points for rethinking learning processes and educational institutions.

Theory and practice walk side by side. Before the creative visual arts have been regarded as contributors to knowledge, not as problem solvers, not to take too seriously. But the idea that the creative arts can be more than creative production constituting intellectual inquiry and contributing to new understanding and insight is a step that questions what gets valued as knowledge. Over the last couple of decades, a new trend has emerged in research in the creative visual arts, one that includes practice and performance as depictions of and vehicles for research.

Practices of knowing are specific material engagements that participate in (re)configuring the world. The move from matters of fact to matters of concern allows for “speaking nearby”, a method to engage with the practice of the student, that allows to enter into a dialogue with the student. Whose work is being thought of, produced, and exhibited just like mine. Speaking nearby as a method for tutoring. Inherent to this practice of speaking nearby is a critique of the authority of knowledge in most educational institutions.

To open new perspectives of education mixing methodologies from different disciplines as well as a simultaneous commitment to both critique and care, embrace another notion of objectivity which offers an exceptionally rich resource for bridging current methodological divides.

Practitioners should dedicate time to education or some kind of knowledge dissemination. Educator duties are not to be taken lightly. Educators that teach in practice and that think through ideas in the process of producing work achieve better results. Classes where reflection runs in parallel and is addressed in critical sessions promote a forum for debate and strengthen the sense of community.

Educational institutions can act as protected environments for practice-based research. Multidisciplinary and collaboration across departments should be instigated. Privileged resources should be available to students.

A sense of community should be encouraged among educators and students. Along with diversity, enquiry and shared experience. Educators and students should be fluent in working both on a theoretical and a on a material level.

Educators and students should find a common ground to work both individually and collectively to advance media practice, art, and the public humanities.

Educators should provide a driving force to activate students' lives and of all the school community in general.

Methodologies that are focused on having the students acquiring knowledge by promoting individualized learning processes achieve better results. Educators shouldn't provide advice in opposition to granting access and discussion.

Experimental methodologies with pedagogies that prioritize the students' projects and their research interests and where the educational environment acts simultaneously as a comfortable and a hostile laboratory achieve better results.

The learning process must be structured not only to confront the student with different methodologies and approaches but also to aim at the development of multiple problem-solving strategies. The skills acquired become stronger and much more meaningful to the student. This method focuses on the student, promoting a personalized education.

The laboratory practice methodology and heuristic research process stimulate student's autonomy and ability to map their place in the world.

Meeting a generous educator can open the student's horizons and have an impact in his/her path.

Teaching must be rewarding to the educator. It must be stimulating when the students are motivated and when educational environment provides it.

If the student fails in acquiring tools or doesn't show interest for the activities the educator should be blamed. The educator must be active within the educational environment and to participate in the pedagogical discussion.

### **Tutoring (speaking) near by**

*"It is necessary for me always to keep in mind that one cannot really theorize about film, but only with film. This is how the field can remain open."*

(Minh-ha 1992: 122)

### **Tutoring methodology**

1. a conversation sharing matters of concern, not matters of fact.
2. not a suspicious tutoring
3. a close tutoring = proximity: does not point to an object as if it is distant from the speaking subject or absent from the speaking place; gets close to the subject without sizing or claiming it
4. reflexive and multivocal
5. indirect language
6. not a conclusion: moments of closure are only moments of transition opening up to other possible moments of transition
7. not a technique or a statement to be made verbally, it is an attitude in life, a way of positioning oneself in relation to the world.
8. a point of departure for a cultural and cinematic reflection
9. critical affect
10. allows space for the void: void is not only the opposite of full, there is another way of conceptualizing the void which is not only an absence for a presence or a lack to a center. This is a reading which does not necessarily needs to be negative. It is the void thanks to which possibilities keep on renewing, hence nothing can be simply classified, arrested and reified. The void is a necessary place, a vital open space in terms of creativity.
11. partially illogical, elliptical and metaphorical

If we are talking about matters of concern it does not make sense to be 'speaking about' someone else's work, instead it makes sense to be 'speaking nearby' someone who shares and expresses, through same means, different concerns. The chain of production is horizontal in its structure.

The tutor positions him/herself in relation to the student's work from a hybrid place where the meeting of several modes of representation and historicity need to continue to be spoken and revisited.

The student is thus indirectly linked to the place from which the tutor speaks in relation to educational exploration. This link can be framed as a question of identity. Speaking nearby is critical in its performance, which is not to do away with paranoia and suspicion all together, but rather that the speaking nearby subject transforms the paranoid impulses into a creative, enabling, and reflexive tutoring practice.

Speaking nearby is thus a form of critical inquiry. Speaking nearby becomes critical inquiry because it pushes us to the limits of our surest ways of knowing. The difficulty is how to perform knowledge as an affective enterprise.

(in dialogue with Sara Magno 2019)

**Tutorship guidelines** *(during and after the educational program of the institution)*

*Watching, writing, reading, thinking, watching again, imagining, speculating, are some of the daily activities of the student and tutor. What converges all these activities is the question of how – How to do all that? How to design a habit of doing it? How to do it methodologically?*

**Meeting the student** (Profiling in order to adapt and customize the tutoring sessions)

- a. Share personal ways of thinking, concerns, opinions, references, anxieties and background to establish a wider dialogue.
- b. Share informal time in order to straighten bonds and proximity.
- c. Share personal account on working methodologies and experience.
- d. Share informal conversations.

**Work with the student**

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- a. Lead the student to focus on a specific project even if it is only taken as an exercise and to complete it. While also allowing space for other on-going projects.
- b. Lead the student with organization, planning and sharing.
- c. Lead the student in communicating his/her imaginary.

- d. Lead the student to understand, integrate, seek and manage the different project stages and resources available. Including production, funding, promotion and exhibition/distribution on his/her fields of practice.
- e. Lead the student to build a complete project dossier/working document possible to adapt and customize quickly to several stages of the project from the idea to the exhibition/distribution.
- f. Lead the student to adapt and customize the project's dossier to particular needs. It includes language level, terminology, content, collaborator's notes, funding opportunities (national and international), production, among others.
- g. Lead the student to identify the project's state of art and to inscribe it within the contemporary discussion.
- h. Lead the student to identify problems and to seek multiple hypothesis as solutions.
- i. Lead the student to plan and to control a production calendar.
- j. Lead the student acknowledge a personal working methodology or a certain personal way to do things.
- e. Lead the student acknowledge a personal universe of references and how to make use of it.

## II

- a. Promote a shared working terminology.
- b. Promote commitment to deadlines and results.
- c. Promote agency and independence.
- d. Promote critical thinking and reflection.
- e. Promote continues auto evaluation.
- f. Promote ethical behavior and responsibility.
- g. Promote a sense of community and sharing.
- h. Promote the need for sustainable projects.

## III

- a. Provide the student references and external conditions suitable to the student's needs.
- b. Provide the student a sustainable network raging all stages of the project.
- c. Provide the student access to the tutor's working space by find ways to collaborate during and after tutorship.
- d. Provide the student models and templates for the assigned exercises.
- e. Provide the student tools.
- f. Provide the student exercises that help to develop skills tangential to the project.

- g. Provide the student a syllabus.
- h. Provide the student customized exercises and bibliography that help to reinforce a universe of references, to acquire skills and to unblock processes.
- i. Provide assistance whenever requested.
- j. Provide meetings that don't take place within the educational institution.
- k. Provide the student support and discussion after the conclusion of the studies and outside of the educational institution.
- l. Provide the student with follow up opportunities and possibilities.

### **Communication with the educational institution**

- a. Communicate difficulties or challenges in order to optimize the work.
- b. Communicate working methodologies and pedagogical experiments.
- c. Communicate with on-going reports when possible.
- d. Communicate a final report and evaluation.

### **Evaluation (if any)**

Theoretical-practical learning: The tutor proposes a practical approach upon theoretical contextualization, namely the presentation of concepts, materials and techniques in its relationship with critical thinking.

Continuous assessment: Ongoing evaluation of the student's participation in curricular activities, namely the level of the responses to the presented exercises and the subsequent discussions on its outcome. The continuous assessment is based on the following criteria: i) Attendance; ii) Commitment; iii) Critical criteria

Periodic assessment: Exercises are evaluated according to the following criteria: i) Interpretation of the exercise, ii) Development and depth, iii) Clarity of presentation.

### Global appreciation:

- effort, motivation and care for the project
- commitment
- deadline match
- delivery of the intended materials
- consistency and formatting
- communication intentions
- master lexicon and the use of terminology
- break up information
- critical thinking
- awareness on how to proceed

Comments

Achievements compared to the student's performance and background:

Progress made

Tutors follow up instructions:

Bibliography

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Latour, B. (2004). Why has critique run out of steam? From matters of fact to matters of concern. Critical Inquiry, 30(2), 225-248.

Minh-Ha, T. T. (1992) Documentary is/not a Name. October, vol. 52 p. 76-98, ed. MITT Press