

CALL FOR DECENTERING PEDAGOGY TOOLS

Early 2022

An Arts and Pedagogy Working Group within the [GDC](#) Network has been meeting regularly since late 2020, mostly to listen to each other's dreams and nightmares, problems and tactics, ideas and reservation around the arts of pedagogy and the pedagogy of arts. Along the way we currently describe our group "as a forum for cultural practitioners and self-organized collectives from around the world to work, play, and (un)learn traversing formal and informal structures, settings, and spaces. We seek to develop and adapt tools and resources for looking, listening, sharing, playing, learning, questioning, and sustaining in a decentered way."

To this date the members come from diverse backgrounds: self-organized groups, artists, PhD students, university lecturers, museum workers, filmmakers. It is our hope that the list of members can grow along the journey of this call. Our group learns together by sharing tools: tools to nurture collectivity, tools to undo hierarchy, tools to create intimacy... It is our hope the list of tools can grow along the journey of this call.

YES, WE ARE CALLING YOU!

You who are unsatisfied with the prevalent individualistic and meritocratic mode of studying, you who have been experimenting in building a decentered classroom where the hierarchical relations between the teacher and the student is unlearned, you who believe that another way of studying is possible.

Our call invites cultural and education practitioners from diverse learning spaces (from universities to community kitchens, from formal schools to the backyard spaces, from museums to artist-run spaces) to share critical pedagogical tools which have been developed through collective learning practices. What kinds of strategies, tactics, and methods have been created, tested out, and developed to redistribute power in your studying spaces?

This is our call to develop a network where we can share our tools and transform them into knowledge commons.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DECENTERING PEDAGOGY TOOLS?

When we talk about tools we talk about the products of negotiation, opposition, intervention, and alternative propositions to deflate hierarchies in established education and cultural institutions and to develop interdependent relationships in learning spaces.

And no one tool will fix it all, no one size fits all...

They are part of the process that moves us away from the commodification of education and towards learning/sharing as valuable in and of themselves.

The tools are not syllabi or teaching aids. The knowledge to be co-generated is not predetermined. The process of learning is as important as the outcome.

To create tools means to establish our stance towards specific issues.

To create tools means to articulate our struggle into actions.

With tools in our hands, minds, feet, and words we enact our struggles.

To create tools means to create a platform where we can speak to each other.

Complacency is impossible.

To create tools is to resist.

What do **you** mean by decentering pedagogy tools? We'd like to hear your thoughts and experience. Let's do tooling together!

SOME EXAMPLES OF DECENTERING PEDAGOGY TOOLS FROM OUR WORKING GROUP:

1. Taman Siswa ("Garden of Students") taken from Indonesian pedagogue Soewardi Soeryaningrat's teaching principles formulated in 1922 in an effort to counter the infantilizing nature of Dutch education in the colony.
2. The Jacotot method (a 19th century pedagogical method reconceptualized in Jacques Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*).
3. A digital altar set up to collect intentions in a group meeting.
4. Augusto Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*.
5. *Anekāntavāda* अनेकान्तवाद ("many-sidedness"): a tenet of thought that dates back to the ancient Indian philosophy of Jainism. Truth, it proposes, is not something monolithic, centralized, and doctrinal. It is de-essentialized, de-centralized, and multi-dimensional.
6. Questioning Aporia: Derrida can offer us an effective critical tool when he states that the construction of *logos* – the (again, supposedly) overriding Truth – is awfully fraught with *aporia*. In other words, it's the nodes of confusion originating from the inner contradictions in the thought. These are the blind spots that we hit while moving along the systemic and commonly practiced lines of thinking. These are the pensive moments that invite us to disrupt the hegemonic Truth with counter-questions.
7. GDC's "How Do I Decenter That" checklist.

HOW WILL WE SHARE OUR TOOLS?

We hope to create an online collection of decentering pedagogy tools that will be available to everyone.

Please send us stories of your tools. What are they for? How do they work? In what situations do they work or fail to work?

If you respond to our call, we will invite you to a series of online gatherings to share and try out some of these tools. Building from our conversations, we will be furthering our collaboration into writing the tools and possibly publishing the collection.

CONTACT

Send your questions and contributions to lyno@sasaart.info and kianchow@gmail.com until **31 May 2023** in any language you use them. We speak many languages, and we'll try to answer your questions as best we can. Please add a short description in English if the contribution is in a language different than English.

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