Argumentor

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Teaching argumentation and / or science?

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In a growing number of countries – due to reforms in national and local curricula – the most accessible entry point to teach argumentation is in science education. Nature of science (NOS) knowledge and the ability to discuss socio-scientific issues (SSI) provide not only content-knowledge, but also grant teachers with ample opportunity to teach argumentation skills. Teacher-training, however, lags behind these curricular efforts, and teachers usually have no adequate training to exploit these opportunities. The reasons are manifold: a) due to the cognitive development of students (typically showing strong confirmation bias and the general tendency to rely on authority), design of learning environments are crucial for effective teaching, b) choice of theory and perspective is vital – and currently neither the commonly used rhetorical nor the traditional logical, and not even the more modern Toulmin-based approach seems to be ideal for numerous reasons.

The paper tries to map how recent scholarship in Argumentation can remedy some of these problems (stressing the importance of the specific framework the teacher has in mind when her aim is to teach argumentation). Recent results from an European project (HIPST, 2008-2010), and knowledge gained through the analysis of discursive (argumentative) practices in the classroom (Erduran and Jiménez-Aleixandre 2008) will also be used to discuss some of the ways more fruitful learning environments can be constructed in the classroom. A surprising outcome is that a large variety of argumentative situations – including internal monologues in the discovery process, rhetorical techniques in publications, scientific controversies in a core group, and debates on socio-scientific issues in the public sphere – can be utilised when teaching the nature of science through what we call 'histories of science' (A. Aduríz-Bravo and Zemplén).

Reference: Erduran, Sibel, Jiménez-Aleixandre, María Pilar (2008) Argumentation in Science Education – Perspectives from Classroom-Based Research. Springer.

Training in Argumentation
– some didactical reflections based upon practices in teaching rhetorics at Södertörn University, Stockholm

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The didactic form of training in argumentation is based upon what is an easy and what is a difficult task in argumentation. The studies should proceed from basic to advanced. But what is basic, easy to understand and can give rise to argumentation? What are the necessary basics on which we build more complex argumentative patterns?

It is also important that students should be able to identify different forms and aims in argumentation. They have to be able to separate the correct from the incorrect way of arguing. They should also be able to develop a sense for qualities, such as validity, relevance and weight.

Which are the suitable ways of training? When do the teacher use the form of group-work and when use exercises for the individual; oral or in writing tasks? Another question is the function of the pupil in the exercise. Do they have the role of a creator of argument, a supervisor or a questioner?

Keywords: teaching rhetorics, didactics in rhetorics, argumentative skills, teaching argumentation.

Organizing Fair and Effective Communication
A Case Study on Educational Debate

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The aim of my presentation is to analize the ethical and pragmatical issues risen by formal communication in a debate setting, where patterns of interaction are more vulnerable to conflict and emotional involvement. In fact, educational debate is an effective tool of teaching and learning participatory communication practices. It also helps develop critical thinking skills (Driscoll 2000).

As teachers, leaders and organizers we are in the position to set the rules of communication on ethical and pragmatical grounds.

From an ethical perspective, organizing dialogue settings is concerned with three main questions:
– Who is going to interact during a particular formal communication?
– Why is the interaction important? Why do we involve certain peolple?
– What is the agenda of the interaction? What do we want to achieve?

From a pragmatical point of view, in order to achieve the goals and objectives of a particular interaction, we have to answer further questions:
– How are we going to proceed? Which are the steps and procedures to use? How do we measure success?
– When are we going to stage the event? What is the timing of each step?
– Where is the interaction going to take place? How are we going to organize the space?

Applying this framework of analysis to the case of debates organized at Agumentation Techniques course will raise further questions and answers concerning fair and effective communication.

Keywords: debate, fairness, effectiveness, formal communication.

Reference: Driscoll, William (2000): Discovering the World through Debate. New York, International Debate Education Association.

Presence of the Non-Existent
Challenges Faced by the Study and Teaching of Rhetoric and Rhetorical Argumentation

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Referring either to the anti-modernist (Weaver, Taylor) narrative of rhetoric's birth, death and resurrection or works of the modernist rhetoricians (Burke, Richards, Perelman) we can state that the widening presence of rhetoric is detectable in many disciplines. Its notions, methods are spreading, never-theless the study of rhetoric – especially in Europe – is treated as a field better not to be mentioned when speaking about science.

Liberal democracy used to be and is presently based on the autonomous individual and thus the fundamental distrust in persuasion that subverts this autonomy. That may be among the reasons why rhetoric treated formerly as a study of persuasion could not keep its place inside the scholarly domain. When rhetoric is narrowed down either to the 'collection' of persuasive techniques or to a structuring device of text-producing and decorating it loses the capacity to serve as a language by and through which identities, relations, situations can be defined, managed, changed. The trope of rhetoric as decoration is rooted most powerfully in the partitioning the classical five canons of rhetoric by Petrus Ramus. He removed from rhetoric the canons of invention, arrangement, and memory – and rendered the former two into the realm of logic –, leaving behind style and delivery, thus starting the tradition to concern rhetoric as a form of style and performance. Rhetoric has become a form rather than the content while its concepts and methods has been infusing new approaches into many disciplines. This 'presence of the non-existent' calls for new approaches to the study of rhetoric, for the resituation of argument, the integration of the visual into the rhetorical tradition and the adaptation of the rhetorical tradition to the digital age.

This paper aims at outlining the challenges rhetoric and the teaching of rhetoric (in higher education) should answer. It will raise questions considering the *vision,* the *status* and the *content* rhetoric provides for teachers and students. Starting from the "homo rhetoricus", following with the concept and community forming "phronesis", finishing with "netoric" (or next rhetoric) the presentation will propose a theoretical

framework within which the teaching of public discourse, argumentation (verbal and visual), and critical thinking can be integrated. Upon the theoretical basis will the methods be introduced and dwelt.

Countering Argument-stoppers

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The subject of this paper is argument-stopping dispositions or techniques, and how to counter them to make room for reasoned discussions. I will start from a description of the mental dispositions the 18th-century philosopher Isaac Watts, saw as detremental to rational debate. In his influential and for almost a century repeatedly reprinted major work Logick, he discernes several character traits the expression therof in different ways will halt or impair debates or discussions. Watts personalizes these dispositions as the figures of e.g. *the Credulous Man, the Man of Contradiction, the Dogmatist* and *the Sceptic*.

I will give a theoretical interpretation of how expressions of such dispositions impair reasoned discussion, and the suggest how to effectively counter them. The theoretical grounds for this will be the argument theory first developed by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess coupled, and modern epistemological rhetoric.

Finally, I will reflect upon the presupposition that the dispositions always are detrimental and argue that there is proper room for attitudes of dogmatism, relativism and scepticism in rational reasoning as well.

Keywords: argument-stoppers, debate, argumentation, rhetoric, dogmatism, scepticism

Debating Contemporary Internet-Based Religious Discourse in Class - some remarks regarding personal experience in teaching and discussing applied rhetoric and communication with students

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With the emergence of the internet, new ways of communication and social interaction have formed in the realm of electronic media. Anonymousness together with the opportunities offered by the new *participatory media* has brought substantial changes in the ways people communicate with each other. While fundamental discourses – like "*apocalyptic rhetoric*" (O'Leary, Stephen) – suffered no significant changes, online rhetoric and narratives may be characterized by special features of "*secondary literacy*" (Balázs Géza). Religious fundamentalism is just one field that readily took advantage of the new ways of communicating, and various extremist, apocalypticist, conspiracist groups formed in turn their own dramaturgy of "*ritual deliberation*" (Howard, Robert G.).

As a lecturer in rhetoric and communication studies with interests in apocalypticism I investigate such online groups and forums and try to discuss with my students the uses and misuses of the new means of interpersonal argumentation and participatory media.

Keywords: *web rhetoric, participatory media, virtual groups, apocalypticism, ritual deliberation*

Present Models of Eloquence

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The starting point of my communication is that in present rhetoric are to be found three types of approaches concerning eloquence:
1) The ELOQUENCE = COMMUNICATION: transmission of information (capturing, encoding, transmission, storage, measurement and information processing)
2) The ELOQUENCE = ORATORY: persuasion (seduction, incitement and manipulation of the audience / public)
3) The ELOQUENCE = ARGUMENTATION: conviction (auditory/public adhesion to a claim due to its truth).
The point of view that I sustain is that it has been reached to this model of eloquence through a process of adjustment of the Aristotle's one (ELOQUENCE = ETHOS + PATHOS + LOGOS) to each of the three present hypostasis of the eloquence (communicational, persuasive and argumentative), yet emphasizing a single component of Aristotle's eloquence in each case: ethos – for communicational eloquence, pathos – for persuasive eloquence and logos – for argumentative eloquence.
I argue my point of view by comparative analysis of some contemporary models of the three hypostasis of eloquence: the mathematical and the cybernetic model of communication (for communicational eloquence), Larson's SMCR model and Rank's model (for persuasive eloquence), Toulmin's model and the 'real' models of critical thinking (for argumentative eloquence).

Keywords: rhetoric, models of eloquence, communicational eloquence, persuasive eloquence, argumentative eloquence

Pragma-Dialectics and the Search for Truth

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According to Pragma-Dialectics the goal of argumentation is the resolution of disagreements. The rules and the evaluation of argumentation are tailored to secure this goal. There are no criteria or guarantee that the position agreed upon by the two parties is a right (or reasonable) one. The weirdest ideas will do if accepted by both parties. I will argue that this is an incomplete portrayal of argumentative practice. It overlooks the epistemic side of argumentation: we often use arguments in order to find the right position, the best solution, to acquire further knowledge, to learn whether a claim is justified etc. First, I will attempt to show that the epistemic goal is central in certain argumentative situations (while persuasion is negligible). Secondly, I will argue that epistemic import is expected even in those cases in which argumentation is about the resolution of disagreement. After having discussed a problem and reached an agreement, we generally presume that this consensus represents some sort of collective wisdom. The consensual position is supposed to be a reliable one not only arbitrarily agreed upon independently of its epistemic merits. Finally, it will be briefly touched upon whether Toulmin's model gives the kind of epistemic criteria that are needed.

Keywords: theory of argumentation, epistemic rules and criteria, pragma-dialctics, Toulmin.

Persuasion and Argumentation

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This study approaches the relation between persuasion and argumentation. There are analyzed several perspectives about persuasion and the role of argumentation in order to manage public opinion. The psychological point of view about persuasion is criticized and instead, it is built a logical model of persuasion. The intensity of our beliefs can be increase or decrease taking into account the logical relations between propositions, in conformity with the results of the probability theory.

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Evaluating Reasoned Dialogues
A Case Study: *Euthyphro*

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The purpose of this paper is to present a critical thinking approach in analysing reasoned dialogues. Fundamental theoretical aspects are first to be presented, including those advanced by van Eemeren et. al. (2002) and Walton (1989, 2000, 2006): dialogue theory, argumentation theory. Some of these theoretical tools are then to be applied in the particular case of a platonic dialogue, *Euthyphro*. The process of critical analysis reveals fundamental skills necessary for this type of research that are included in the process of identifying and evaluating argumentation. The final part of the paper attempts an answer to the question concerning the adequacy of this type of analysis in the case of philosophical dialogues.

Keywords: dialogue theory, argumentation, identifying argumentation, evaluating argumentation, critical thinking, philosophical dialogues.

Political Argumentation – Consensus and Conflict

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Democratic systems are the outcome of a complex process of political and social pressures, ideas, and political decisions. Most democratic systems in Western Europe achieved their final form till first half of 20th century. It means that the fundamental values, ideas and beliefs do not fundamentally change over time. In Central and Eastern Europe we could see a political transformation from a totalitarian regime to a pluralistic democracy. These democracies differ in what they see as being the core of the democratic system and also differ in their political culture and civil society.

In every democracy political elite plays a key role in shaping political argumentation/debate. What is their goal: consensus or conflict? How does this appear in political debates? How can it be explained in the classroom? This paper attempts to get us closer in answering those questions.

Keywords: political culture, political elite, consensus and conflict, political argumentation and debate.

Argumentative Discourse about Works of Art

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The discourse connected to the realm of art and, most of all, argumentative speech connected to works of art differs from the discourse of the realm of science. The specificities of the language of aesthetics are due partly to the fact that we can talk about aesthetic properties which are different from non-aesthetic properties.

In 20th century art we come across works of art in the case of which aesthetic properties are irrelevant. According to the thesis of the paper, if we can differentiate between perceptually indifferent works (e.g. Duchamp's *Fountain* or Ondak's *Loop*) and perceptually relevant works (e.g. a Monet or a Van Gogh), then this difference will be mirrored in the discourse about these works.

Keywords: aesthetic judgement, verdictive judgement, aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties, perceptually indifferent artworks