Slovenian Experience with Rhetoric
in Primary Schools[*]

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According to rather anecdotal sources (Farenga, 1979, pp. 1035–36),[1] in the 5th century BC (467–66) the city of Syracuse was dominated by Gelon and Hieron, the most brutal tyrants. As the Syracusans were being reigned over so brutally and inhumanely and, so the legend says, prayed to Zeus to free them from that bitter servitude. Zeus freed the Syracusans from the tyranny. Consequently, the Syracusan people's Assembly decreed to have control over everything. However, a person named Corax, possibly a member of the overthrown regime, saw that the people were an undisciplined crowd, and figured that speech may give structure to a person's character; so, he made sure to persuade and dissuade the people for their own good by means of speech.

What seemed of prime importance was the land. Namely, Gelon and Hieron took the land from their owners and distributed it to their mercenary soldiers; now that they were overthrown, the land had to be restituted to their original owners. But so, the misty sources say, there were no written records, there was no cadaster. Therefore, it was decided that people who wanted their land back had to appear in front of the Assembly, and persuade it only by speaking (speech) that a particular piece of land belonged to them. Some of them succeeded, some of them did not, I believe. I am also guessing that those who were more eloquent, and knew their way with words (how to do things with words), even got back more

[1] There are several versions of this story. See also Kennedy, 2009.

land than those who were not so handy with words. This is just a speculation, there is no historical evidence to support it.

Why is this anecdote important, even today? Because it shows that speech, organized and structured speech, in the right moment and in the right place, is not meant just to please the ears in poetry and drama, but can have economic and political force to change things. Syracusans got their land back just by speaking, and today, we all know about the enormous force (well structured) speech had in Athenian democracy. *Vir bonus dicendi peritus* (Quint. *Inst.* 12.1.1), though the phrase appeared much later, was the order of the day.

Slovenian National Assembly on Rhetoric

Which brings us to the Slovenian situation and to the rather bizarre story about rhetoric becoming a compulsory elective subject in Slovenian primary schools (compulsory elective means that all primary schools have to offer it; there are 454 of them in Slovenia). Here is the story.

Soon after the Slovenian independence in 1991, discussions started about the reform of the educational system. The findings and the proposed direction(s) of reforms were published in the *White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia* in 1995.

During sometimes rather heated debates in the National Assembly, the problem of religious education came up. Some of the parties advocated the introduction of religious education into schools (like Christian Democrats), some of them did not (like Liberal Democrats). In one of these debates, a representative of Liberal Democrats came to the speaker stage and said (the quotation is approximate, there are no reliable written records):

> What we Slovenians need, now that Slovenia is independent, is not religious education in schools. What we need, what our children need is to learn how to speak properly, we need rhetoric. Therefore, I propose a motion that rhetoric become a subject in the new curriculum, not religious education.

The motion was put to the vote and to general surprise, rhetoric was voted as a new, compulsory elective subject in the new curriculum.

You should know that Slovenia holds a world record in the number of so-called rhetorical schools per capita. Almost everybody has them, from the Chamber of Commerce to religious orders to industrious individuals that want to earn some easy money. These schools promise to teach you the basics of logic, rhetoric and argumentation in just 4 hours. Or, they promise you, how to dress appropriately for different occasions, how to use cutlery, when and how to blow your nose in public, even how

to cut your nails. How to sell things efficiently has also been a hot "rhetorical" topic in the last 10 years. Mostly, these schools would be run by people from theatre, TV presenters or people from marketing, but usually, anybody could do. And what they would teach/sell is mostly the last canon of rhetoric, delivery (*actio* or *hypokrisis*), leaving out the basic canons of rhetoric: *inventio*, *dispositio* and *elocutio*.

As you can see, with the decision of the National Assembly, we were confronted with a hard task: to establish rhetoric in its historical framework, as a subject that educates for active citizenship in contrast with a cheap everyday praxis that sees rhetoric as a rather instant tool for selling things.

So, I was asked to write the syllabus. In doing so, I was completely on my own, because no other country in the world had rhetoric as a school subject in its own right. I was mostly in contact with colleagues from the USA where (classic) rhetoric still enjoys a much greater reputation (in academia as well as in professional life) than in Europe where, since the 19th century, rhetoric became reduced to lists of rhetorical figures mostly taught in courses on world literature.

The syllabus was ready and officially approved in 1999 (Žagar, Ž. et al., 1999/2004), and the teaching of rhetoric in primary schools started in 2000/2001. But, of course, the need to implement the syllabus caused new problems: the textbook, for different reasons, was not ready until 2006 (Zidar et al., 2006), and there was no university program that would educate teachers of rhetoric. What to do?

What we did, at the Educational Research Institute where I work and with the help of the Ministry for Education, Science and Sport was to organize intensive in-service education/training for prospective teachers of rhetoric: 3 consecutive days, 8 hours per day, free of charge. The demand for this in-service training was extraordinary, but so was the stress, for the participants and for us, the trainers (coaches), who were working Saturdays and Sundays, the whole day through.

But after a few enthusiastic and successful years, the economic situation worsened, and the Ministry demanded that these in-training seminars become payable. Since our seminar was the most extensive one, the price they set was 82€ per person. Which is a lot, for schools as well as for individuals. So, the interest and the attendance dropped immediately; in the year that followed there was no more in-service training. Also the teacher support, organized by the National Institute of Education, followed the same track: in a few years the Subject (discussion) group for Rhetoric was dismantled, and slowly schools were offering Rhetoric as

an "ordinary" elective subject, one among 60–70 (depending on how one counts).

With the new government that took office in 2014, things have somehow changed and there was a renewed interest in rhetoric. What also helped was that I became the director of the Educational Research Institute in 2015, which gave me more institutional power and the possibility to push things further.

So we are now in the process of revising the syllabus for primary schools (Žmavc et al. 2018), preparing the syllabus for secondary schools and even negotiating a new university program for educating the future teachers of rhetoric.[2]

How the Syllabus was Structured

Now, after this long but necessary introduction, it is time to show you how our syllabus was constructed, what worked and what did not, what in more than 15 years of practice – accompanied with big changes in society and advances in the technological development – turned out to be too difficult, and what will have to be adapted to the new generations of the 21st century.

Our definition, the starting point in the rhetoric syllabus was the following (Žagar, Ž. et al., 1999/2004, p. 2):

> Rhetoric is a discipline which, in various forms and scope, has accompanied mankind practically throughout history. This, of course, is not accidental, since the aim and objective of rhetoric is the analysis and more accurate and precise formation of arguments and techniques of persuasion in all spheres of human life from everyday seemingly trivial conversation through the media and educational system (to mention but two spheres) to scientific discourse. What is said or written can have an optimal effect only where a speech or written record is adequately structured when it is relevant to its objective and its target audience.

And the aim of the new school subject (ibid., p. 3):

> The aim of rhetoric as a compulsory elective subject is to teach pupils not only the concepts of persuasion and argument, but also the techniques of persuasion, elements of persuasion procedure, factors of successful persuasion, forms of persuasion, structuring of (persuasive) speech, and the versatile command of speech situations on the one side, the differ-

2   Activities that are related to the revision of syllabus for primary school and preparing a syllabus for secondary school are a part of the project "Developing of theoretical bases and practical guidelines for teaching rhetoric in the primary and secondary school" (2018–, head: dr. Janja Žmavc), which is founded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

ence between persuasion and argument, the distinction between good and bad arguments, the elements of good argumentation, and (if time and interest allow for it) incorrect argumentative procedures on the other.

And finally, the rationale (ibid., p. 2):

Teaching rhetoric in Grade 9 is not an end in itself; above all, it should teach pupils to independently, coherently and critically form and express their opinions in other subjects in the course of further education as well as in all (other) areas of social and private life.

Now, looking 20 years back, this is quite a program, very traditional and classic, but also very ambitious and (probably) too packed. If I am completely sincere, now, after 20 years, I see the program as so complex that even my university students would not be able to master it completely.

Such an evaluation is, of course, only possible after 15 years of experience and practice, but why is that, why does the syllabus seem so ambitious from a chronological perspective?

First of all because initially it was meant for the last three years of the primary school: the 7th, 8th and 9th grade. But, according to the official procedure, after it was finished and before it was approved by the Special Council for General Education, the syllabus had to be evaluated by developmental psychologists. And their judgment was that the contents presented (and required) in the syllabus for rhetoric were too difficult, i.e. too abstract and too demanding for the pupils in the 7th and 8th grade – therefore they assigned it only to the last, the 9th grade. Consequently, to rhetoric as a compulsory elective subject, 32 lessons (of 45 minutes) a year were assigned, or 1 lesson a week. Just for comparison: at the university level, for a similar syllabus, we have 30 hours of lectures, 15 hours of seminar work and 30 hours of exercises. It was, therefore, obvious from the very beginning, that some of the content will have to be left out (more about that as I go on).

These were our general objectives, what about the operative objectives? Within operative objectives, we postulated 8 functional and 2 educational objectives. If we start with educational objectives (ibid., p. 2):

1) Pupils learn to perform in public and express their points of view.
2) Pupils learn successful persuasion and argumentation.

In a nutshell, these were the basic demands and goals of rhetorical education in ancient Athens: to educate an active citizen. An active citizen in those unique times of direct democracy meant a person that could

competently participate in public life. This is now an explicit objective in our present revision of the syllabus, mostly because of the changes in society in the last 20 years.

And what were the functional objectives necessary to meet the educational objectives? They are as follows, in hierarchical and pedagogical order (ibid.):

1.   Pupils learn what rhetoric is.
2.   Pupils learn why it is useful to learn rhetoric.
3.   Pupils learn the ethics of dialogue.
4.   Pupils learn what argumentation is.
5.   Pupils learn the difference between good and bad argument (not compulsory).
6.   By learning the component parts of rhetorical technique, pupils understand how they can form a convincing speech.
7.   Pupils learn how important the character of the speaker and the passions of the listeners are for successful persuasion.
8.   Pupils learn about the origins and history of rhetoric (not compulsory).

You are probably wondering what "non-compulsory" means? It means that it is a content that can be left out. I have already mentioned that the syllabus was finally approved just for the 9th grade, so if anything had to be left out in those modest 32 hours of teaching rhetoric, it should be these two things:

-    History of rhetoric. We judged it was more important for the pupils to learn how to construct an effective and persuasive speech;
-    The difference between good and bad arguments. Especially from a philosophical point of view, this is an important topic. But again, working with just 32 hours, we judged that at this level (9th grade), it was more important for the pupils to learn what an argument is, how to build it, and where to use it, then to master the difference between good and bad arguments (which is, by the way, still a hot topic among argumentation theorists).

You may also wonder why we placed argumentation before parts of speech. The answer is that argumentation and argument (of one kind or another) play such a crucial role in rhetoric and persuasion, that we judged it of paramount importance in learning the basics of rhetorical technique. If pupils manage to master (well, learn) what argumentation is and what role arguments play in the game of persuasion and the structure of speech, it will be much easier for them to master the role of other parts of speech,

canons of rhetoric or *officia oratoris* for that matter. And the 15 years practice proved as right; though on the other hand, the concepts of argument and argumentation caused many problems and misunderstanding (as I will be showing later).

Definitions, Goals, Activities

How did we structure the syllabus in view of achieving these operative objectives? Let us start with the first functional objective: "Pupils learn what rhetoric is."

First, we set up the definition of what needs to be learned/mastered and then set up the activities to achieve this goal. Like this (ibid., p. 3):

Definition: "Pupils learn that rhetoric is not an art or a science, but a skill (or technique)".

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Activities: "Based on concrete school subjects, pupils look at the difference between arts (e.g. music and painting), sciences (e.g. mathematics and physics), and skills (e.g. physical education: skiing and skating)."

Why did we think this (definition) was important? Because we wanted to make it very clear from the very beginning that rhetoric is something that *everybody* can learn (with sufficient exercise and motivation, of course). Not everybody can be a nuclear physicists or concert pianist, but everybody can learn to speak coherently and persuasively in public. It was meant as an encouragement with the main motto: *repetitio est mater studiorum*.

Or if we look at the second definition (under the same heading (ibid.)):

Definition: "Pupils understand the social dependency of successful persuasion: its dependency on speech situation, target audience and the valid system of values."

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Activities: "Pupils prepare two speeches on the same subject: one which they think will be a success, and another which they think will fail; they explain the reasons for their decision in the classroom."

And why is it important that pupils at this stage of their development and maturity learn that there are different speech situations, different target audiences, different systems of values? Because it de-naturalizes their everyday personal experiences, those that are obvious, usual and homely for them, these activities serve as a kind of *Verfremdung* effect, as Bertolt Brecht would call it, an alienation effect, a kind of defamiliarization, a distancing from what they are used to in their everyday life, show-

ing them that there are other possibilities and options, that other people may have different values, may live in a different situation and therefore represent a different target audience demanding different approach.

If this objective is rather Protagorean in nature, the next one: "Pupils learn why it is useful to learn rhetoric", is even more radical, almost Platonic (in the sense of inciting "wondering" or *thaumadzein*). First, there is a definition/goal (ibid., p. 4):

"Pupils understand that rhetoric helps us persuade and understand in a variety of situations."

And then there are activities to achieve this goal, going from empirical to abstract (ibid.):

"First, pupils read a few examples from literature aloud (e.g. Tom Sawyer painting the fence). Then, they try to find (e.g. in the mass media, literature and in everyday life) examples of arguments for or in favour of something and against it."

In the following step, the goal is to understand why it is possible to talk with conviction in different (and even opposing) ways about the same thing. And there are three types of activities to achieve this goal, going from the very empirical to the very abstract (ibid., p. 4):

"- Pupils look at examples of different even diametrically opposed speeches on the same subject (e.g. sports, music, film, television and politics).

- Pupils invent examples of different (even opposing) ways of argumentation on everyday family issues: doing the dishes, tidying, etc, and enact them from their different perspectives.

- Pupils explain why it is (in their opinion) possible to look at the same things from different perspectives."

Why is this inductive procedure (pedagogically) important?

First of all, because it teaches pupils how to get from empirical observation (a) to abstract thinking (c). Second, because it is, again, Protagorean in nature: it shows them that there is not just one absolute truth, but many relative truths, depending on the perspective, on the relation to the discussed problem (*homo mensura* > Ἄνθρωπος μέτρον ἁπάντων). It shows them that one can look at things from different angles, therefore, different onlookers can see the same thing differently, they may notice different aspects of the same thing, they may evaluate it differently (depending on their intellectual, cultural, religious, economic background, or just the heat of the moment). And becoming conscious of this plurality is also the beginning of philosophical wondering, *thaumazein* in Plato's words:

why things are as they are, while they could be completely different > why there is something while it could be nothing. But this emphasis on plurality has a very rhetorical twist: if it is possible to look at the same thing from different perspectives, we can also represent it (construct it) from different perspectives.

Therefore, if this is how things are (different perspectives > different conclusions > different truths), how do we tell facts from fiction, truth from falsehood? The is a question of paramount importance in the world we live in, and a question that always surfaced at our in-service training of future teachers of rhetoric.

Some Problems with the Syllabus

That is where and why we introduced the "ethics of dialogue" in the syllabus. I must state from the very start that naming this objective "the ethics of dialogue" was a mistake, and that we did not really succeed with this objective. It was not to be about politeness and respect, and etiquette, it was meant to be about how things work in everyday conversation, that everything that is communicated is not told explicitly (Grice, 1989), and that there are structures in language, which are systems that have argumentative potential, certain argumentative orientation (Ducrot, 1996; 2009), which we have to pay attention to when constructing our arguments and speeches.

Here were our goals for this objective (Žagar, Ž. et al., 1999/2004, p. 5):

a) "Pupils learn the unwritten rules that lead a conversation (understand maxims of quality, quantity, relation and manner)".

What we had in mind was, of course, Grice's *Logic and Conversation* (1989, pp. 26–28) with his famous maxims:

1. The maxim of quantity, where one tries to be as informative as one possibly can, and gives as much information as is needed, and no more.
2. The maxim of quality, where one tries to be truthful, and does not give information that is false or that is not supported by evidence.
3. The maxim of relation, where one tries to be relevant, and says things that are pertinent to the discussion.
4. The maxim of manner, when one tries to be as clear, as brief, and as orderly as one can in what one says, and where one avoids obscurity and ambiguity.
5. In spite of the fact that these maxims just elaborate on our everyday conversation activity, translating it into a more standardized and

normative form, this goal failed, it was not followed or implemented, and it ended up as one of those objectives that were left out of our ambitious and packed syllabus.

b) "Pupils understand that what has been said reaches beyond the literal (they understand what presuppositions and implications (implicatures) are)." (Žagar, Ž. et al., 1999/2004, p. 5)

Once more, we are in Grice's universe. Consider a sentence (potential utterance), for example:

Jane no longer writes fiction. >

Presupposition: Jane once wrote fiction.

Jane no longer writes fiction. >

Possible implicatures: She turned to painting.

She has a new job.
She is happily married now.
....

How can one tell them apart:

Presuppositions can't be negated, implicatures can.

Presuppositions can't be cancelled, implicatures can.

This goal failed as well; in spite of the fact that implicitness and innuendos are important parts of rhetoric. It turned out it was too difficult even for the teachers, and if something is too difficult for teachers ...

c) "Pupils understand that language is not only a neutral means of persuasion and argumentation, but that it can also persuade and argue by itself (e.g. language particles such as already/only, only/almost etc.)." (ibid.)

With this objective we wanted to call attention to an interesting language phenomenon, discovered by French linguist O. Ducrot (1996), that different phrasing of the same "fact", put forward as an argument, can lead to different conclusions:

It is already 8 o'clock > It is late.

It is only 8 o'clock. > It is (still) early,

while the "state-of-affairs" is the same in both cases: it is (simply) 8 o'clock. What effect/meaning/conclusion we wish to achieve depends on how we phrase the argument.

This goal failed as well, though it is worth noting that it is very successful with my university students: if nothing else persuades them that it is useful and fun studying rhetoric, these kind of examples does.

The next operative objective, and a very important one, was (Žagar, Ž. et al., 1999/2004, p. 6): "Pupils learn what argumentation is". This objective has two goals:

a) "Pupils understand the definition (To argue is to support one statement (claim, standpoint, conclusion) with one or more other statements (data, arguments ...)";

b) "Pupils learn the basic elements of argumentative procedure (they understand what data, claim and warrant are)".

What we have used as a model was Toulmin's (1958) basic scheme:

Claim (C)   Janez is a Slovenian citizen. (standpoint, conclusion)
                                 (What have you got to go on?)

Datum (D)   Janez was born in Slovenia. (argument, premise)
                                  (How do you get there?)

Warrant (W) People born in Slovenia will generally by Slovenian citizens.

And here is the activity designed to achieve the above-mentioned goals (Žagar, Ž. et al., 1999/2004, p. 6):

"Pupils in work groups analyse examples from textbooks they use in other subjects (and also in magazines they read, TV shows they watch, etc.) in terms of whether the topic is given and explained in accordance with the elements of argumentative procedure."

I've chosen the Toulmin model, because I thought it was pedagogically and didactically the best (and I still do). Why? Because it leads the student from one stage to another with rather clear questions, serving as guidelines and instructions. But it somehow didn't work.

After discussing this problem with several teachers, I think it did not work for two reasons:

a) the pupils, as well as the teachers, did not understand these leading questions well. As a consequence, they did not understand the importance and the role of the warrant, because they did not understand the question, leading from the argument (datum) to the warrant: "How do you get there?" Get where, exactly? Well to the point where you have to explain why you think this particular data supports the claim, where is the relation and of what kind? But, instead of looking for a relation between D and C (argument and conclusion), they were producing more and more D's that (in their view) supported the C, but never explained their rationale.

The role of the warrant is to the argument to the conclusion, or more precisely, to explain, to make it clear why this particular argument is a suitable backup for this particular conclusion (standpoint). Obviously,

leading questions were not as clear and transparent as we thought they were; maybe for philosophers, but not for the kids in primary school. So, what we are doing now in refreshing the syllabus is making these leading questions clearer and as unambiguous as possible:

Claim (C)   Janez is a Slovenian citizen.

(How can you support this claim?)
With what can you support …

Datum (D)   Janez was born in Slovenia.

(Why do you think this datum/
argument can act as a support
for this claim?)

Warrant (W) People born in Slovenia will generally by Slovenian citizens.

b) the activities intended to achieve these goals demanded sitting down, reading the examples and analysing them, while pupils nowadays – as one of the teachers who have been teaching rhetoric for the last 15 years can comment – "don't like to read and write that much anymore". And that is the basic problem with almost all the activities that did not work: the need to read, to analyse/assess/think about what was read and write down the conclusions/impressions. Kids, pupils, even students just do not want to read and write anymore. Which is the major problem for future education, closely connected to the spread of digital devices in schools.

Reading and Writing as a Problem
(In Contemporary Education)

Every year – and I have been teaching rhetoric at the university level for almost 20 years –, I start my lectures by asking the students (young people around 20 years of age): Do you read? What do you read?

In the beginning, around 2000, very few students reported reading books, some of them were occasionally reading newspapers and magazines, most of them were watching TV. In the course of years that followed, books were the first to disappear from their reading horizon, soon after that newspapers and magazines followed, and in the last 3 or 4 years even TV. And when I ask them nowadays, "So, what do you read? Where do you get your information from?", they reply: "Oh, from time to time, we look things up on the internet."

From time to time they look things up on the internet … And thus, we are slowly but definitely moving from a "read and write" to the "browse and swipe" civilisation.

This is also what a large COST project "E-READ: Reading in the Age of Digitisation" showed. The goal of this action was to research whether there is a difference between reading from paper and reading from (any kind of) screen. A total of 52 countries participated, I was a part of this action, and so were colleagues from Greece. The project was completed last year, and the results were devastating: the research showed that when reading from digital devices, the reading is much shallower, there is no immersion, retention time is much shorter, and so is concentration (for reading).

One piece of research even showed that when comparing two groups of pupils, working on the same task, where one of them is working with paper and pencil and the other with tablets and screens, the "digital" group is much more confident that they will complete the tasks faster and more successfully than the paper group. What the results showed after the completion of the task was that they were actually much slower than the "paper group" and they were much less successful in completing the task than the "paper group".

There was no meta-study on why this is yet, but it is pretty safe to surmise that pupils' sporadic, fleeting, and superficial interaction when using social media in the digital world (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat ...) were kind of automatically, because of the media used, transferred to more demanding tasks being represented digitally on the screens.

Now, if we return to our problem with argumentation in the implementation of the rhetoric syllabus objectives: if Toulmin's basic scheme presented a problem (because the leading questions were not clear enough), what did the students do instead? They turned to debate, unstructured debate to be exact, where they had to set a claim/standpoint and find as many arguments in its support, wherever they were prepared to look for them.

This is also the point where teachers gave up and adapted to the demands of the syllabus to the new reality. Namely, the syllabus demands that pupils get three grades in the course of the year: two for preparing and delivering a speech and one for rhetorical analysis of the speech or text. In writing. Teachers gave up on the last task, and replaced it with debate, grading the debate competition. No analysis, no writing.

This uneasiness with reading and especially with writing is probably also the reason why the operative objective (though an elective one (ibid., p. 6)): "Pupils learn the difference between good and bad argument" did not work well either.

The goal could have probably passed as acceptable: "Pupils understand that a good argument has to be true, acceptable, relevant and sufficient for the intended purpose."

But the activity seemed too demanding: "Pupils in work groups analyse examples from textbooks they use in other subjects (and also in magazines they read, TV shows they watch, etc.), and explain whether and why the arguments used are true, acceptable, relevant and sufficient.

In order to construct good/acceptable arguments themselves, one has to learn about existing/available arguments first as well as about the criteria for their assessment (by reading them, analysing them, forming an opinion/conclusion; there is no other way). Instead, they started to construct their own arguments from scratch, compiling as many arguments as possible for one conclusion.

Let us move to the 6th objective (ibid., p. 7): "By learning the component parts of rhetorical technique (canons of rhetoric), pupils understand how they can form a convincing speech", which worked a bit better. With some shortcut and modifications, of course.

Invention (ibid.)

Goal: "Pupils understand how they can find arguments on any topic/subject by asking the right questions (who, what, where, with whose help, how, why, when)."

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Activities: "By using the net of seven questions (who, what, etc.) pupils practise looking for arguments on a given subject (e.g. the Olympic slalom winner, the heaviest man on Earth, the President of the Republic or pollution of the environment)."

The net of 7 questions proved useful when looking for arguments in order to construct a speech, but not in exercising/applying them on different materials, set in advance.

Disposition (ibid.)

Goals

a) "Pupils understand that only with proper disposition of speech components (introduction, narration, argumentation and epilogue) it is possible to achieve persuasive effects."

b) "Pupils learn speech components and understand their functions."

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Activities

a) "Pupils in work groups analyze individual texts (e.g. from fiction, journalism ...) and find out whether they are composed/written in accordance with the rules of disposition; they argue their findings and explain them in the classroom (also in discussion with a fellow pupil representing the opposing point- of-view)."

b) "Pupils prepare short speeches in accordance with the rules of disposition on a given topic; they argue their decision (choice and order of speech components) and explain it in the classroom."

Again, activity a) meant as a necessary preparatory stage for activity b) did not work that well because it demanded quite some reading and analyzing. Getting acquainted with existing speeches (or texts) is a necessary step for constructing one's own speeches, but it demands time and effort, so it was dropped (due also to the fact that there were only 32 hours available). Activity b) on the other hand worked quite OK, all things considered, except for the second part, arguing the decision and explaining it in the classroom.

Elocution (ibid., pp. 7–8)
Goals
"Pupils understand that with different wordings of the same topic (the same arguments) they can achieve different effects on their listeners.
↓
Activities
a) "Using the basic techniques of different wordings (addition, subtraction, transposition, substitution) pupils change the given text to make it sound more/less polite/convincing, etc.; they explain their decision, in accordance with the rules of rhetorical skill and speech structure, in the classroom (also in discussion with a fellow pupil, representing the opposing point of view)."

b) "Pupils write a short speech on a given subject and then exchange it with the pupil sitting next to them, who tries to (re)write the speech using other words by:

- Keeping the same emphasis;
- Making it sound stronger (sharper);
- Making it sound weaker (softer);
- Trying to reshape the given speech by using the same expressions to persuade/argue in the opposite direction.

They explain their decisions in accordance with the rules of rhetorical skill and speech structure in the classroom."

I hope you can see that these activities were carefully designed in order to show as clearly and explicitly how large the scope of rhetoric is and what a vast array of things it can do and achieve. But all these exercises demand a lot of work and effort, a lot of writing and rewriting – while time was very limited, and so too was the motivation of students for writing and rewriting.

Memoria (ibid., p. 8):

different techniques were used, but predominantly learning by heart. There was no big problem with this objective

Actio (ibid., p. 8):

Goals

a) "Pupils understand the importance of performance and non-verbal language/body language for efficient persuasion."

b) "Pupils learn and understand how gesticulation and mimics emphasize or weaken what has been said."

c) "Pupils learn the importance of stress, intonation, tempo, rhythm, pitch and intensity of voice for successful persuasion."

↓

Activities

a) "Pupils (if possible) listen to a famous speech from history, the effects of which are well-known (they can also use inserts from films)-"

b, c) "Pupils read the same speech many times by changing gesticulation and mimics, stress, intonation, tempo, rhythm, pitch and intensity of voice; they discuss the effects and reasons for such effects (also with a fellow pupil representing the opposing point-of-view)."

Activities b) and c) did not work, of course, because – you must know it by now – they demanded far too much time. Again, I hope you can see that these activities – not taken out of the blue but tested and well established – were carefully planned and designed – but not for one year of teaching. I am the only culprit to be blamed, of course, but on the other hand, the syllabus was so rich with activities that it could have been read as a catalogue of activities, and teachers could have chosen just some of them, or reduce the extent of particular activities. Unfortunately, this was not the case (or very rarely).

Conclusion: What Should/Could be Done?

Besides the amendments I have already mentioned, here are, in rather general terms, the main changes we are going to introduce based on systematic consultations with some 20 teachers of rhetoric in primary schools, as well as with different experts from different fields.

1. When teaching the canons of rhetoric, we are not going to start with *inventio*, but with *actio*. Why? It is a didactic decision. Rhetoric is being taught in the 9th grade, which is the last year of our primary schools. Through all their schooling, through all those previous years, they were systematically exposed to and actively participated in different kinds of "oral presentation". Therefore, we thought it

would be more appropriate, a "softer" start in a way, if they are introduced to rhetoric with something they already know and give this knowledge a theoretical and technical foundation.

They would learn how to control the body and the voice, and how different body postures and voice modulations and manipulations, influence the audience. Which is also of great importance for the modes of persuasion. Not just for ethos and pathos, knowing how to control one's body and voice can also greatly influence logos.

2. From *actio*, conceived this way, we then approach *inventio*. We have eliminated the teaching about syllogisms, enthymemes and *topoi* with a heavy heart, but in these concrete circumstances where the syllabus is too packed, where there is little time to learn and practice, and where the new subject is pretty new, less is indeed more. We have also eliminated the "ethics of dialogue", merged some related objectives (objectives 6 (canons of rhetoric) and 7 (modes of persuasion) thus giving more time to exercise and practice.

3. All these eliminations were "replaced" by stasis in its simplest form, leading the seven questions grid and the invention. The simplest form meaning that pupils have to determine first whether the problem at hand is about: fact, definition (of this fact), quality (of this defined fact) or about the policy/place (of this defined and qualified fact).

4. We have restored a written analysis of a speech or a text, necessary for one of the three grades, and insisted on written preparation of speeches in our recommendations. "Browse and swipe" cannot replace "read and write", is going to be our motto.

5. And finally, rhetoric should not be a goal in itself, it should serve to educate an active citizen. We hope to achieve this goal by inter-curricular modifications and adaptations, especially in close collaboration with the teachers of civic education.

The necessary talks with the ministry are already on their way.

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