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The Model

How do you think about rhetoric? An art? A practice? What does rhetoric comprise in today's world? What image sticks in your mind for "rhetoric"? For most contemporary students, the key vocabulary of rhetoric founders in Greek and Latin terms, organized into hierarchical outlines, lists, glossaries, and books. Even with the addition of the searchable resources of the Internet (e.g., Gideon Burton's Silva Rhetoricae, http://rhetoric.byu.edu/ or Richard Harris' website "Virtual Salt" for A Handbook of Rhetoric http://www.virtualsalt.com/rhetoric.htm), students have difficulty understanding and applying the most simple and straightforward definition of rhetoric such as Aristotle's ability to choose in any given situation the most appropriate means of persuasion[1]. Questions abound. What needs to be chosen? Why does the context matter? Who cares about the choices? How does one choose? What is an "appropriate" choice? When is an argument effective? Even if a simple definition is expanded to the "means of communication", students still struggle to internalize and consider the relations that may influence their messages. In a practical sense, we need a model and a method for today's rhetoric, one that builds on ancient to contemporary rhetorical theory and practice.

I suggest herein a model for rhetorical choice-making that is practical: it provides both the mental schema and the visual heuristic (Lauer; Enos and Lauer) that is interactive, fluid, and relational; a tool to investigate mentally and manipulate visually rhetoric by those who compose, read, hear, write or edit, and analyze communications. The model can be used to teach, learn, and apply rhetorical principles from early ages throughout one's creative career, regardless of discipline, and it can be used as an expanded model to become more complex as the learner advances in study. The model allows its users

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[1] "Rhetoric then may be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever." (Aristotle, I.14-2., 15).

flexibility of vocabulary so that as skill advances, so may conceptual understanding. The model can be used in dialog with oneself or with others to discover new knowledge or to examine what is already known, that is, "to discover". I have used and refined this model since 1990 in experiential learning and teaching situations with undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in traditional and e-campus courses for technical writing, scientific writing, science journalism, and essay writing. More recently, in a game environment, I have used the techniques associated with the model to observe invention of communications by preschool children.

In its simplest form, the model is depicted by a pyramid comprising four equal triangles. The basic pyramid is created by connecting four points in relational dyads (lines) and triads (planes) that represent the participants in a rhetorical situation. These points can be labeled by the user for the particular situation under his or her consideration. One point is named for the message; one for the author; one for the individual receiver; one for the community wherein the communication takes place (Figure 1).
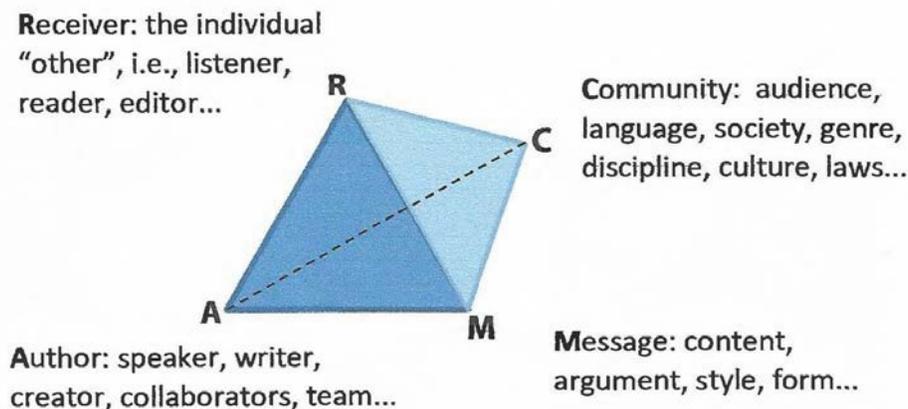

Receiver: the individual "other", i.e., listener, reader, editor...

Community: audience, language, society, genre, discipline, culture, laws...

Author: speaker, writer, creator, collaborators, team...

Message: content, argument, style, form...

Figure 1. Pyramid model sketched for basic rhetoric; contents of each point can be defined by the users.

For example, in a particular project, a speaker may choose to label her model with the points "presenter-listener-political rally-speech"; in turn, a research writer may label his model with "author-reader-discipline-journal article" (Figure 2).
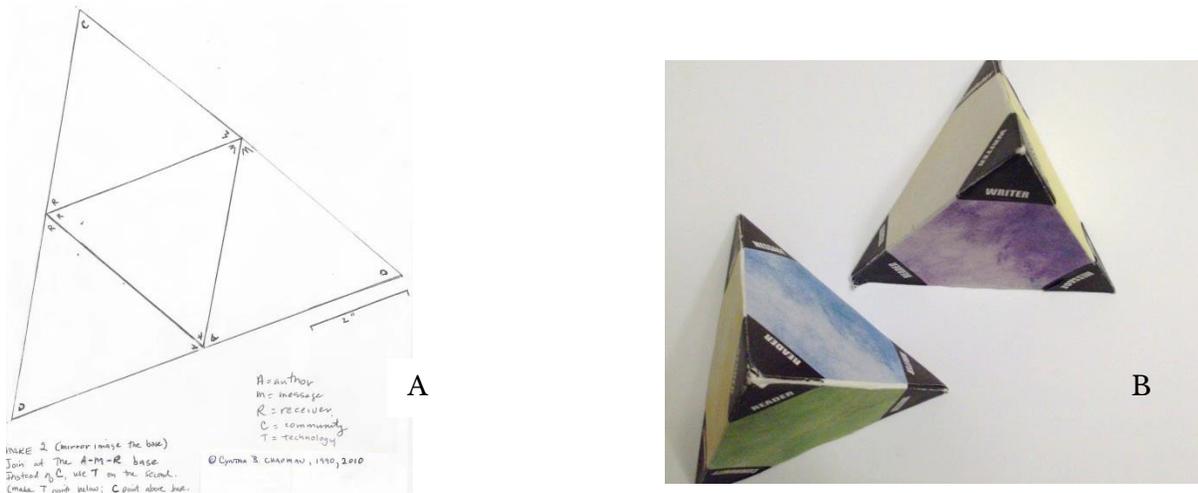
Figure 2. The handwritten, cardstock pattern (A), drawn about 1990, and the colored cardboard pyramids (B), circa 2010, of the model of basic rhetoric. Points are labeled author, message, receiver, and community or technology on the pattern. The pyramids are labeled writer, message, reader, and community on one and writer, message, reader, and technology on the other pyramid. Colors were selected randomly in these early versions to help users distinguish triads.

Over the last three years, I have improved the cardboard interactive model (a cardstock template is still available online at https://authorseditors.com/pyramids) to enable users to access an updated, 3-D digital version of this basic-rhetoric pyramid. To operate this heuristic, click on the link, click on the model and allow it to load, then grab a point of the pyramid with a finger or a mouse and move the model in any direction. The pyramid can also be sized by using the scroll-roll button on the mouse or by pinching or by stretching your fingers on the figure for live screens.

By manipulating the basic model and thinking about its parts—I call it "tumbling" when naming the motion for students—one begins to internalize it as a mental map or schema for either inquiry or analysis. For this basic-rhetoric model, a user can consider relations—typically by asking then answering questions—among the four points, six pairs (or dyads along the "lines"), four triads (triangles), or the entire three-dimensional (tetrahedron) pyramid. Meaning becomes made within the schema, and may change as the

consideration is made from the author's, receiver's, or community's perspective, which illustrates the point of how to make rhetorical choices. As the pyramid is rotated, the user can choose to symbolically make a consideration less important by simply moving it to the "back", while bringing forward the chosen more important considerations. Typically, the process is as ordered as the user chooses it to be, and that process can also be quite random.

Similarly, a user can consider how technology expands the basic pyramid by adding one such point opposite the community point, which essentially compounds the pyramid. Technology represents the media through which the message is conveyed: paper and pen or print, audio, video, electronic, visual, and so on. With five points, nine relational pairs or dyads, and eleven triads, the expanded pyramid now resembles a diamond (i.e., two basic pyramids conjoined at the base triad, author-message-receiver, Figure 3). Note that in this figure, five of the triads are located interior to the pyramid. Adding one point has increased the relations from fourteen in the basic to twenty-five in the expanded pyramid.

Figure 3. Original model (2010) designed for expanded rhetoric. Colors were randomly assigned to the triads. For the expanded-rhetoric interactive model, see the link below and touch or click on the model to manipulate it: https://authorseditors.com/pyramids) . Techniques for moving the model are the same as for the basic-rhetoric pyramid.

For further clarity in the newest digital versions, the triads of the basic rhetoric pyramid appear in primary colors with the additional triads of the expanded rhetoric pyramid assigned secondary colors. Colors help users spot the dyad or triad in a discussion. The basic triad—author/message/receiver—is depicted in beige and can only be seen

internally or around the edges where the two pyramids are conjoined. Four additional triads within the expanded model (created by bisecting the interior along the community-technology points) were not illustrated because of technical difficulties at this time. The digital models are open, not solids, implicitly making each point, line, dyad, and triad open to meaning-making. A constraint of the 3-D animation and printing technology at this time requires the lines depicting the dyads and triads to be thicker than I originally envisioned.

The Method

Either model can be entered at any point, line, or plane on the pyramid(s). Considerations begin at the point of entry. Meaning resides yet evolves between and among the specified relationships for any given situation, and the choices the user makes within that situation, including the role or stance chosen by each user, which can be indicated by position at the front or at the back. Consequently, I often suggest entering at the author point at the front. Five seemingly simple questions based on the pyramid points also can help a user begin, and their order is not important, although the language needs to be appropriate to the age or experience of the user:

1. What do you want to say (or write or convey)?
2. Who in particular do you want to receive your message?
3. Can you describe your role, skills, or constraints as author?
4. Which community influences the making and receiving of the message?
5. What specific ways will technology shape your message, its delivery, and to whom it is directed?

With little provocation, users start to recognize that additional questions arise from consideration of the dyads and triads as they pursue answers: Why this message; does it have more than one purpose for my receivers? Are my receivers varied and do they have

certain cultural biases, different languages? Are we a team of authors—so who's the lead on the message? Do my receivers belong to a community the same as mine or different communities? How does the print copy of my journal article need to be different than the online version? Which considerations are most important? Isn't everything important? Not only have choices greatly expanded, the questions associated with each relation seem endless. At some point, the user realizes that tumbling can stop, enough is known. Composing or analyzing can begin. Tumbling may need to resume later.

In the cardboard model days, I would toss the pyramids into the class, and undergraduate students would tumble the pyramids in their hands while rapidly assimilating the relations of communication and learning to consider then make choices. The tumbling also prompted additional research when questions were posed but could not be answered.

Methodologically, then, the model is dialogic not linear: it allows the user to propose questions then suggest answers and make choices among possibilities in a structured yet relational approach. This method is self-guided, heuristic, and iterative; subsequent considerations may refine choices, introduce additional considerations, confirm or reject prior choices. Practically, I have introduced the pyramids to graduate students with a series of two exercises that begin with questions seeking the simple answers about their research projects and what they (not their mentors or peers) want to report. A subsequent exercise poses more complex and ethical questions that involve collaborative authors and committee members and other communities in possible answers. Eventually, graduate students begin self-directed questions that invite responses from mentors, peer reviewers, and publishing outlets, and they move comfortably to using the expanded pyramid. The expanded pyramid has been introduced to undergraduate students to use in technical writing and multimedia projects. I have used the expanded pyramid in discussions with

professional authors on editing projects, mostly when their works will be published in more than one medium, and often when the manuscript begins its life as a dissertation.

To my surprise, the method and the pyramids also can be used to explore rhetorical choices and situations with much younger students. In the example below, I, as teacher, met with a small group of preschool authors (2 and 3-year-olds), in a Q&A dialog (summary, Table 1), based on just the points of the basic rhetoric pyramid. In a more

Table 1: Questions to invent "the Valentine"		
Teacher	**Students**	**Heuristic**
We have a holiday coming up soon; does anyone know what day it is?	Valentine's Day ("Balendine's" also was shouted.)	Community-culture
What happens on that day?	Candy and Valentines!	Community-symbols
What is a "valentine"?	A card; a present to someone else	Community-language
What shape is it?	A heart? (Some say triangle; they are peer corrected.)	Message-form
What color is the heart? Paper hearts in many colors are available. Students select one or two.	Red! (Some shout purple or pink or orange!)	Message-meaning
Okay, most of you picked red and pink. Why did a couple of you choose purple? Orange?	Purple is momma's best color; no dad's favorite is orange…	Receiver-preferences
What do you want the valentine to say?	To tell "I love you".	Message-purpose
Okay, I have stickers you can use that say "I love you"; where will you put them?	On the heart! (A few land on clothing and tables.)	Message-form
I put crayons on your tables; anything else you want to write on your Valentine?	Flowers! My dog! (Many other pets are mentioned; all sorts of things are drawn.)	Message-style, content
How will your mom or dad or special someone know the Valentine is from you?	I'll put my name on it (some only can print a single letter but that suffices as a signature!)	Author-role as creator
What do you think mom or dad will do with the Valentine?	Read it; put it up on the frig. SAVE it!	Receiver
Why will they do that?	So they know I love her (or him).	Receiver-purpose

formal teaching situation with a slightly older student group, perhaps beginning writers, I might have introduced cardboard (or now, 3-D) models to encourage students to tumble

the models while they thought about their tasks. With no visual aid at all, only a back-and-forth question-and-answer method based on considerations of author, receiver, message, and community, students quickly adapted to the method; note that these students could neither read nor write

Just as it had for these toddlers in a few minutes, over many years (almost thirty) as I used the interactive cardboard models then the digital pyramids, the choices of Aristotle's argumentative inquiry described by James McBurney (172) for dialectic (questions and answers to test factual reasoning) and for rhetoric (proofs of the probable directed to audiences) became complimentary processes with deliberate, relational choices.

Origin of the Models and the Method

My first formal exposure to rhetoric was in graduate school; I was a scientist and social scientist, trained to write professionally by doing it from the late 1960s in college, through the mid-1970s as an analyst in the Congressional Research Service at the Library of Congress. That position required me to collect scientific facts on health issues and "spin" those facts into political speeches for members of Congress on the entire political spectrum of the 1970s. My graduate school experience with formal rhetoric began in the late 1980s: a variety of models (Kinneavy's communication triangle; Burk's pentad; Flower's hierarchies and issue trees; Odgen and Richards's meaning triangle, Peirce's elemental sign [Killingsorth and Gilbertson]) represented the relational yet one-dimensional, often linear yet recursive processes within composition studies. A review of the ancient-to-modern texts (Aristotle; Connors, Ede, and Lunsford; Corbet, Golden, and Berquist; Gage; Perelman; Quintilian; Witte, Nakadate, and Cherry) shaped how rhetoric was taught and learned in the English department. The history of rhetoric offered through the speech department used imitative methods to analyze and compare the same ancient-to-modern

texts. For me, something was missing: how did ancient Greeks and Romans actually think rhetorically? I couldn't find a practical, mental schema within which I could organize, and more importantly relate, the complex cannons, genres, proofs, topics, and current rhetorical or composition theory so that I could make the necessary choices. Instead of a compartmentalized or linear approach to simplify rhetoric and composition processes, I needed a tool to "complexify" it, that is, to examine, manipulate, and relate the parts.

Consequently, the overarching question for me as a student then teacher of writing then a professional editor became "how do we think about composing or communicating?" We have very little evidence through their speeches or writing of how the ancients thought, but Kirby, while analyzing Greek literature via its culture, provided an insight in a footnote:

> The love for parallel structure manifests itself quickly in Greek culture, in the plastic arts and in architecture as well as in literature. The designs on vases of the Geometric period, the rows of columns on a temple, evince a desire for order (kosmos) and arrangement (taxis) that proves one of the most characteristic traits of Greek classicism. So it comes as no surprise that such a principle should also be manifested in the Greek language. Binary parallelism is by no means an exclusively Greek phenomenon; but in its conjunctive form (both A and B) as well as its disjunctive (not A but B), it lies very close to the heart of Greek syntax. Nor is it sheerly [sic] a matter of structure. Concepts themselves may be juxtaposed in an associative or dissociative way, even when there is no parallelism at the syntactic level. Such juxtaposition is useful because it clarifies thought: if we want to know more about A, it may help us to know that A is like B, or that there are bonds of association between A and B. Or, if we are told that A is not like B, that A is implacably opposed to B, or that A and B are mutually exclusive, then B serves as a foil, a ground against which A can be figured more clearly. (Kirby, footnote 5)

Kirby provided a key to how the Greeks may have thought about rhetorical choices that moved beyond the use of language. I believe it is this ancient, inherently dynamic, relational way of thinking that characterizes a rhetorical approach to composing and to analysis.

Future Applications

This model and associated method used to make deliberate, informed rhetorical choices needs to be formally tested with a variety of authors in composition, communication, and publishing disciplines. It is with this purpose in mind that I have documented the development and use of the pyramid tools and methods to advocate for a dynamic, relational way of thinking about rhetorical choices. In addition to the print template and digital models on the website, I also plan to provide on my website sample applications, exercises suitable for using the pyramids and method with primary school, middle school, high school, college undergraduate, and graduate students. I welcome feedback from teachers, instructors, and mentors on the use of the pyramids and the insights gained from their application.

From my work in professional editing for scientists and social scientists, another area seems ripe for investigation: the scientific method with its inductive-deductive reasoning cycle also produced scant literature on how scientists inductively think about their theories and experiments, even though publishing the deductive conclusions to their peers is the last step in their research process. Bazerman's extensive examinations of the scientific journal article correctly concluded that this writing is a persuasive social construct used by scientists to advance knowledge as well as careers, prestige, and peer recognition. Likewise, Bazerman affirmed the journal article in the social sciences or in the liberal arts also has similar outcomes. When I teach this form of writing to graduate students, after the draft of that journal article is complete, I ask the students to shift the consideration to make the public, not their disciplinary community, the most important audience. Next, they are required to rewrite their manuscript as a magazine article, using actual guidelines from a chosen outlet. Thoroughly vested in the research and its knowledge (the message), these authors often experience confusion and frustration until they can sort out considerations of the individual reader, conventions for attribution in journalism, and for personal

storytelling in this rhetorical situation. Some realize that the inductive part of their story can be told in the magazine article, lending clues to why the research was important to that scientist and how his or her thinking shaped the experiments outside the context of prior literature. What happens to thinking when authors experience what is forbidden in the one situation while the same is encouraged in the other situation, with both grounded in publishing? For the most part, liberation: these authors learn to appreciate the journalist as well as that their choices can enable their chances to be published in either—or both— outlets. They also learn how their rhetorical choices affect the outcomes of the writing. I have extended this exercise to include transformation of the journal then magazine articles to the poster presentation and to a 5-minute speed presentation on their research—in each case employing the pyramids to help them make appropriate choices.

I have also noted subtle changes in presentation of information that are moving toward this same dynamic, relational approach. Instead of a list of definitions in the 2016 revisions to the Silva Rhetoricae, for example, "ethos" is described in terms of speaker (author), message, and audience (receiver) (elements of the basic pyramid), then the term is related to other figures and topics (items recognized by the community).

I have played with applying the tumbling method to the persuasive appeals, cannons, and strategies of rhetoric. In doing so, an "acronynmatic" shorthand developed to help my thinking, with letters A (author), R (receiver), M (message), C (community), and T (technology). For example to consider one of the cannons, style, in order of importance by tumbling considerations, it might be described as R/C-A-M/T (literary), C/R-M/T-A (scientific), M/T-R/C-A (technical) styles. Similar descriptions can be written for invention, arrangement, delivery, and memory. Analyzing memory in this way pointed to how my use of the pyramids had created internally a schema for thinking about the relations and in retaining that discovered information for future use.

I have also come to recognize in making rhetorical choices that two principles from science also apply. In science, knowledge is affected by active constraints and passive constraints. For an author or a receiver, a constraint deemed active is changeable if shown to be in error, for instance, in a theoretical paradigm shift. Likewise, in a language words themselves restrict how they are used—word usage, part of speech, and so on—until their meaning changes, e.g. "impact". On the other hand, a passive constraint is a more rigid boundary, difficult to cross. In science, one passive constraint is the boiling point of pure water at specific altitudes—that boiling point stays the same for that altitude; it can be changed only if a property of the water is altered (like adding salt). As a result of thinking about the constraints, I've come to see also how the pyramids can point to both active and passive constraints in making rhetorical choices. For example, one critique of scientific writing (i.e., the journal article) is that it is formulaic, universally the IMRAD (introduction, materials/methods, results, and discussion/conclusion) form. Using the pyramids, however, I have come to believe that the message is actively constrained by its form no matter what the discipline. In many instances, a form is used by the author because that form is easily identified and understood by its receivers and community regardless of a particular technology. Sometimes, authors play with many forms of a message deliberately to shock or stimulate the audience—or to teach. Just as in science, messages are shaped by their forms whether that is a novel, short story, poem, play (each literary), a website or manual (technical), a newspaper story (journalistic), or a peer-reviewed article (science, social science).

Passive constraints in making rhetorical choices are long-term, socially constructed-and-understood conventions imposed by communities on their internal and external communications. These passive constraints often exhibit as the vocabularies and style manuals, handbooks, and other guidelines required by specific communities for its authors to publish their messages: tools that are difficult to master and slow to change, yet

arguments for their use persist because they reflect the accepted social norms of that community. One useful teaching exercise involves the class examining a disciplinary handbook using the pyramids—not merely for the rules and other restrictions it contains, but more so for the hints as to what the community expects of its authors and their messages and how the conventions that community imposes affect the rhetorical choices an author may make.

The use of the pyramid tools and the tumbling method to think about rhetorical choices as dynamic and relational have also led me to believe that the outcomes of human communication flow and mingle like a river on a fluctuating continuum from the highly impersonal and practical to the artistic, with lots of side channels and eddies therein.

These pyramids and their inherent considerations can also help to analyze a communication. The process uses the points, dyads, triads, and their relations to examine a work and identify relational patterns, such as forms, arguments, and context as well as the intended audiences and voice of the author. Graduate students have used the pyramids to analyze Watson and Crick's famous article on the structure of DNA published in Nature, April 25, 1953 (http://watsonandcrick.net/paper/). This seminal paper consisted of two pages, one image, and six references—its brevity and clarity a surprise to most readers. With the historical background accompanying that paper and its placement in that particular issue of the journal as context, students begin to understand not only the information provided in the paper but also the arguments contained in a competitive atmosphere in the community which received it, thereby demonstrating the persuasive nature of scientific writing.

As authors mix their messages and forms, as communities change their standards, as receivers assess the value of information, and as technology changes delivery, these pyramids as heuristics enable users to critically assess a communication and adapt to

changes. Moreover, these tools each provide a mental schema on which to make, organize, and

analyze appropriate rhetorical choices.

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