

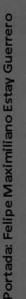
O ¿cómo hacer hoy una buena historia crítica?

Homenaje a Carlos Antonio Aguirre Rojas

Carlos Antonio Aguirre Rojas

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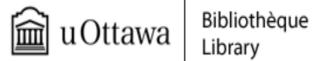








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PH. D. TODOR S. SIMEONOV



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VIRTUAL PEDAGOGICAL RHETORIC: A NEW WAY OF FOSTERING 21ST CENTURY COMPETENCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

RETÓRICA PEDAGÓGICA VIRTUAL: UNA NUEVA FORMA DE FOMENTAR LAS COMPETENCIAS DEL SIGLO XXI PARA DOCENTES Y ESTUDIANTES

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Abstract

There is an unexplored scientific niché positioned between the fields of the pedagogical rhetoric and the virtual rhetoric introduced by the author as virtual pedagogical rhetoric. This paper is an attempt to draw the margins of this new field in the context of the school education – the preparation of teachers for the pedagogical rhetorical act in the "native", for the students, virtual environment. The research approach is carried out by the method of cyberethnography that allows for exploring the virtual classroom or the place where the teacher, as an orator, meets with his/her audience – the students. The results stipulate the importance for the teacher to acquire rhetorical skills in order to help students build competences for the 21st century.

Kevword

Virtual pedagogical rhetoric - Virtual rhetoric - Blended learning - Cyberethnography

Resumen

Existe un nicho científico inexplorado posicionado entre los campos de la retórica pedagógica y la retórica virtual, el cual hemos introducido como retórica pedagógica virtual. Este documento es un intento de sacar los márgenes de este nuevo campo en el contexto de la educación escolar: la preparación de los maestros para el acto retórico pedagógico en lo "nativo" y para los estudiantes, el entorno virtual. El enfoque de investigación se lleva a cabo mediante el método de ciberetrografía que permite explorar el aula virtual o el lugar donde el maestro, como orador, se reúne con su audiencia: los estudiantes. Los resultados estipulan la importancia de que el maestro adquiera destrezas retóricas para ayudar a los estudiantes a desarrollar competencias para el siglo XXI.

Palabras Claves

Retórica pedagógica virtual - Retórica virtual - Aprendizaje semipresencial - Ciberetrografía

Introduction

The information and computer technologies (ICTs) have been developing exponentially since the mid-90s of the previous century till nowadays. This rapid evolution, or perhaps it will be more correct to define this growth as revolution, people and scientists of different fields ask the question: "Is the young generation ready for this new, high-tech world?"; "Are teachers equipped with the needed knowledge, skills and motivation to prepare and teach lessons, that will sparkle the interest, build competences and skills in the young digitally native generations? These questions are going to be addressed in the current study, with the preliminary disclaimer that we will explore a case of one class in a Bulgarian school. This topic is highly sensitive in the eve of introducing a reformation in the Bulgarian schools with a new educational law that entered into force in 2016. This new reform aims to reduce the paperwork of the teachers by introducing digital gradebooks in each school; to legitimize the distant form of education; and also introduces competences-based criteria for each school subject, in which the digital competences are among the basic ones to be developed.

The object of the study is a class of 15 students that have been taught English in a blended environment. There classes are held in the classroom, during school hours, but part of the content and the activities are shifted toward a virtual space – the platform Edmodo that serves as a virtual classroom. Initially the students are observed in the virtual classroom via the method of cyber ethnography for the first term of the school 2015/2016. During the second term, a structured pedagogical intervention is introduced in order to foster digital competences and rhetoric skills.

Theoretical characteristics of the virtual pedagogical rhetoric

The term *pedagogical rhetoric* is found primarily in the Slavic-speaking scientific communities — Pavlov and Totseva¹, Gorobets², Desyaevoy³; other prefer the term *pedagogical communication*, Tsvetanska⁴, Totseva⁵, Tsvetanska & Mizova⁶. The term *educational communication* is preferred by Edwards, Nicoll, Solomon и Usher⁷, as well as *instructional communication* Myers⁸.

¹ Павлов, Димитър, and Янка Тоцева. Педагогическа реторика. София: ИК "Даниела Убенова", 2000.

³ Десяевой, Н. Д. Педагогическая риторика. Москва: Издателский центр "Академия", 2013.

² Горобец, Людмила. "Педагогическая риторика в системе профессионалной подготовки учителя-нефилолога." Известия Российского государственного педагогического университета им. А.И. Герцена, 2007: 132-145.

⁴ Цветанска, Силвия. Предизвикателства в педагогическото общуване. София: Просвета, 2006.

⁵ Тоцева, Янка. "Педагогическа реторика и педагогическа комуникация." Реторика и комуникация, 2009: 12.

⁶ Цветанска, Силвия, and Бистра Мизова. Педагогическо общуване за практически цели. София: УИ "Св. Климент Охридски", 2015.

⁷ Edwards, Richard, Katherine Nicoll, Nicky Solomon, and Robin Usher. Rhetoric and Educational Discourse: Persuasive Texts. London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004.

⁸ Myers, Scott. "Instructional Communication. The Emergence of a Field." In The SAGE Handbook of Communication and Instruction, by Deanna Fassett and John Warren, 149-159. SAGE Publications, 2010.

Totseva and Pavlov define the pedagogical rhetoric as a science for the laws, regularities, principles, methods, rules, means, and concepts through which one could achieve resonance in the thoughts, emotions, and reasoning between the speech of the teacher and her students. They point out that this resonance could be both positive and negative¹. In accordance with their suggestion, I could add that there should always be strive for achieving a neutral, if not positive resonance in the classroom.

Desyaevoy describes the pedagogical rhetoric as a scientific field that creates regularities and conditions for effective professional public speaking practice of the teacher³. By professional the author means that it is part of the sphere of professional communication practice.

Yet another author, Ludmila Gorobets, stipulates that the term pedagogical rhetoric is a scientific field for the conditions and form of conducting effective pedagogical communications². Silvia Tsvetanska and Bistra Mizova prefer the term pedagogical communication, which is, according to Tvetanska, a major factor for the realization of the educational and upbringing process and the communicative skills of the teacher should be refined at a master level⁹. Together with Mizova they give important practical insights and models in their book 'Pedagogical communication for practical purposes' that are to help the educators develop their communicative competences. Gergana Dyankova interprets the pedagogical-rhetorical problems through the prism of the verbal-performing art and brings out the factors generating both the effective and attractive verbal behaviour of the educator. Thus, according to Dyankova, his professional training acquires additional significance, directly related to the skills of the teacher to communicate with the student audience, to influence it and to form their communication skills¹¹. Totseva also dwells upon the term pedagogical communication and defines it as a part of the pedagogical rhetoric. She defines the pedagogical communication as a rhetorical communication and argumentation, pointing out that it is part of the state regulated orator acts of the educator. directly related to the educational process and also unregulated communicative acts of the teacher in an informal setting – with colleagues, parents and the community¹². The definition includes all the stakeholders involved in the educational process - students, teacher-colleagues, school management, local communities, etc.

Edwards, Nicoll, Solomon и Usher¹³ look at the rhetorical aspects of the educational process and communication. They put and accent on the students' needs in the rhetorical discourse of the educational communication. I agree with the notion proposed by the above cited authors that the students as auditory in the pedagogical and rhetoric act have special needs that should be taken into account.

⁹ Цветанска, Силвия. Предизвикателства в педагогическото общуване. София: Просвета, 2006.

¹⁰ Цветанска, Силвия, and Бистра Мизова. Педагогическо общуване за практически цели. София: УИ "Св. Климент Охридски", 2015.

¹¹ Dyankova, Gergana. "Modern Aspects Pedagogical Rhetoric in Light of Verbal-Performance Art." Education, science, inovations (ESI Pernik), 2014: p. 197.

¹² Тоцева, Янка. "Педагогическа реторика и педагогическа комуникация." Реторика и комуникация, 2009: 12.

¹³ Edwards, Richard, Katherine Nicoll, Nicky Solomon, and Robin Usher. Rhetoric and Educational Discourse: Persuasive Texts. London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004.

Another term used to describe the interaction between the teacher and the students is instructional communication¹⁴, in which the author focuses on the learner. The teacher, in the role of an instructor, conducts verbal and nonverbal instructional communication in order to facilitate the learning process for the students – the learners. In this instructor-learner discourse the individual needs and learning style of the students are central for the effective process of instructional communication.

In conclusion the pedagogical rhetoric could be defined as a system of principles for effective rhetorical communication in the sphere of pedagogy – education and upbringing. Another important conclusion of the current literature review is that most of the authors put in the focus of their research the specific needs and styles of learning of the students, and they define strategies and models for effective rhetorical communication in accordance with them.

The rapid invention and introduction of the ICTs and their wide-spread use by the young generations of students are conditions for the change in the paradigm in which we conduct the education process. The new generations of *digitally native* students¹⁵ or *app generation*¹⁶ possess needs far different of the generations of the book and the letter. From a rhetorical view point this is a new audience – specialized in the virtual communication and the new tools and apps of this virtual world. The teachers are in the role of orators as digital immigrants¹⁵, who should learn to navigate in the vast world of the new technologies. The requirements and the need of this new audience lead to the transformation of the methods in which the rhetoric is realized in the virtual environment.

One of the first terms used to describe the rhetorical practice in the virtual environment is *digital rhetoric* in 1994 by Richard Lanham¹⁷. In 2009 Elizabeth Losh defines the term digital rhetoric as public rhetoric, presented by digital technologies and spread through the Web, which combines new digital genres, used in the everyday discourses, but also on special occasions in people's lives. On an institutional level she defines the digital rhetoric as an official political communication, created and shared by political parties and governmental institutions¹⁸. It could be added that as a public, social and political rhetoric, the digital rhetoric is also applicable in the fields of economy and education.

Gergana Apostolova uses the terms *electronic rhetoric (e-rhetoric)* and *electronic agora (e-agora)*, where she describes the e-rhetoric as an art, manifestation of the rhetoric in the World Wide Web (WWW), and e-agora as the "shared common information space" After the transition from the first generation of the WWW - Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 (created by Tim O'Reilly) the communication in the Internet also has transformed.

¹⁴ Myers, Scott. "Instructional Communication. The Emergence of a Field." In The SAGE Handbook of Communication and Instruction, by Deanna Fassett and John Warren, 149-159. SAGE Publications, 2010.

¹⁵ Prensky, Marc . "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants." (MCB University Press) 9, no. 5 (October 2001).

¹⁶ Gardner , Howard, and Katie Davis. The App Generation. How Today's Youth Navigate Identity, Intimacy, and Imagination in the Digital World. Yale University Press, 2013.

¹⁷ Lanham, Richard. *The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts.* University of Chicago Press, 1994

¹⁸ Losh, Elizabeth. Virtualpolitik. MIT Press, 2009.

¹⁹ Апостолова , Гергана. Реториката и електронната култура. София: Фондация "Буквите", 2014.

According to Rosalia Bako the rhetoric in the Web 1.0 that replicates the traditional rhetorical monologue model is called *Web 1.0 rhetoric* (Bako, 2012). This means that only people with certain skills in programming could compile and create communication in the web. After introducing the new generation – Web 2.0, there is ground to speak about Web 2.0 rhetoric with high levels of audience involvement and multimodal elements communication – pictures, slideshow presentations, video, audio, graphics, interactive buttons for redirection to Twitter, Facebook, Delicious and other Web 2.0 technologies²⁰. The author draws an interesting, but accurate comparison between the classical rhetorical classification of rhetoric as monologue or dialogue and the manifestation of the rhetorical communication in the different generations of the Web – Web 1.0 (monologue communication) and Web 2.0 (dialogue communication). Today we speak of Web 5.0 and it would be intriguing to shed light on the realization of rhetoric in that new generation of the Web, but this is not in the scope of investigation of the current paper.

Ivanka Mavrodieva defines the term *virtual rhetoric* as an oratory that is realized in virtual environment as synchronous or asynchronous computer mediated environment, via the means of Internet, when an orator presents online or pre-recorded monologue genres (speech, lecture, report, etc.), presentations or participates in dialogue formats, while using verbal and visual means (of communication)²¹. She also investigates the shift in the academic communication in the universities from the traditional auditoriums to the virtual environment. Her studies reveal that there is a gradual transition from the classical university education to the new channels of providing distant and computer mediated education.

Mavrodieva's findings are applicable in the educational context as well. Teachers also use different Web 2.0 technologies and programs to create virtual educational spaces. These virtual spaces and networks facilitate the pedagogical communication and goals in creating conditions for distant and blended learning. This approaches are part of the everyday practice of the teacher and the learning the classrooms²². Additionally, software solutions such as Facebook, Twitter, Wikkies, Pintrest, Google+, Linkedin, Edmodo, etc., possess unique functionalities that create conditions for social learning of a new type, through communication on different levels: (1) between students; (2) between students and teachers; (3) between teachers; (4) between teachers and parents. This new type of social learning is realized via the means of the ICTs and Internet.

Based on the survey of literature in the sphere of pedagogical rhetoric, education and virtual rhetoric, I suggest a new term – *virtual pedagogical rhetoric*. There is a lack of research in the area of the pedagogical rhetoric in virtual environment or of virtual rhetoric in the educational context (except for the academic level). The virtual pedagogical rhetoric is a type or sub-field of rhetoric that has professional characteristics and is carried out in virtual environment with the means of ICT and Internet; synchronously or asynchronously (recorded); it aims at achieving effective education and interactive communication between students, teachers and parents; central in which are the needs of the digitally literate generations of students. The preparation of the teacher for the virtual pedagogical rhetoric

²⁰ Bako, Rozalia. "Visual Rhetoric in Virtual Spaces." Acta Sapientia Philologica, 2012: 8.

²¹ Мавродиева, Иванка. Виртуална реторика. От дневниците до социалните мрежи. София: УИ "Св. Климент Орхидски", 2010.

Light, Daniel, and Deborah Polin. Integrating Web 2.0. Tools into the Classroom: Changing the Culture of Learning. New York: EDC Center for Children and Technology, 2010.

act and teaching online is of great importance for the effective and contemporary communication with the students that live with and through the technologies.

Research question

The research question that I am concerned with is: Whether the rhetorical traditions combined with the new technological advances are of importance for the professional preparation of teacher and thus way, helping students build digital competences as skills for 21st century? The main goal of study is to research the manifestation of the pedagogical rhetoric communication in the virtual classroom Edmodo. The object of intrest for the study is the pedagogical rhetoric communication between the teacher and the virtual platform Edmodo. The class of students, as the studied subject, is taught English in a blended learning manner, where part of the content and activities are shifted from the brick-and-mortar classroom to the virtual one.

Method

It is not an easy task to study a group or a community in the virtual space is, since the interactivity (Hoffman, Novak, & Chatterjee²³; Jensen²⁴; Hocks²⁵; Братанов²⁶; Warnick²⁷) and multimodality (Cope & Kalantzis²⁸ ²⁹, Jewitt & Kress³⁰; Kress 2004³¹ ³²) levels between is high and the options for inclusion of the researcher participation are limited. In order to gather information and observe the subject of research attention in the virtual environment the classical observation & ethnography methods were somewhat restricted so I expressed a preference for a relatively new method of observation - cyberentnography (Rybas & Gajjala³³; Симеонов³⁴). I realized the observation and "note-

²³ Hoffman, D., T. Novak, and P. Chatterjee. "Business scenarios for the Web: Opportunities and Challenges." Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication 1, no. 3 (1995).

²⁴ Jensen, Jens. "Interactivity: Tracing a new concept in media and communication studies." Nordic Review, 1998; 185-204.

²⁵ Hocks, Mary. "Understanding Visual Rhetoric in Digital Writing Environments." College Composition and Communication (National Council of Teachers of English) 54, no. 4 (June 2003): 629-656.

²⁶ Братанов, Пламен. Функционалност на социалната комуникация. София: УИ "Стопанство", УНСС, 2004.

²⁷ Warnick, Barbara. Rhetoric Online: Persuasion and Politics on the World Wide Web. New York: Peter Lang, 2007.

²⁸ Cope, Bill, and Mary Kalantzis. Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures. London: Routledge, 2000.

²⁹ Cope, Bill, and Mary Kalantzis. Multiliteracies': New Literacy, New Learning. Pedagogies: An International Journal 4 (2009): 164-195.

³⁰ Jewitt, Carey, and Gunther Kress. Multimodal Literacy (New Literacies and Digital Epistemologies). New York: Lang., 2003.

³¹ Kress, Gunther. Literacy in the new media age. 2003: Routledge, 2004.

³² Kress, Gunther. Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication. New York: Routledge, 2009.

³³ Rybas, Natalia, and Radhika Gajjala. "Developing Cyberethnographic Research Methods for Understanding Digitally Mediated Identities." Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research 8, no. 3 (2007).

taking" with the technology of the screencasts – an approach of recording the screen of the computer of another device that is used to access the virtual environment and also make screenshots (pictures of the screen in a particular moment of the observation).

The first stage of the research is only observational – for a term, to gather impressions of how the teacher and the students use the virtual classroom to communicate. The second stage is with the features of an intervention where a class of virtual rhetoric is introduced for the student and the researcher takes the role of a teacher for two hours a week in order to provide structured pedagogical rhetoric act in the virtual environment. The design of nine modules with lessons is subjected to an expert review – five professionals with expertise in the fields of rhetoric, English language teaching, online teaching, reviewed and edited the lesson plans in order to refine the content.

For the interpretation of the gathered empirical data from the observation during the first and the second terms, I utilize rhetorical analysis on several levels:

- 1. Analysis of the virtual environment and situation (adapted method from M. Hocks);
- 2. Analysis of the transformation of the five canons of rhetoric in the virtual pedagogical rhetoric;
- Visual rhetorical analysis of the corpuses of screencasts.

Features of the virtual pedagogical rhetoric

The rhetoric situation as observed with the help of the cyberethnograpic tools in the virtual classroom has been described in technological, pedagogical and rhetorical aspects. According to the applied adapted rhetoric situational analysis in the first and the second stage of the study lower level of interaction and hybridity could be observed. At the same time the levels of transperancy are quite high since the students use well-known media formats – text only, or text combined with a picture. This is due to the fact that the observed teacher and class do not have previous knowledge in rhetoric and the rhetorical application in virtual environment. The interactions of the teacher with the class are merely informational – a shared link with few likes as a feedback from the students.

When the intervention was carried out and the students were taught about the featured of the virtual rhetoric and the five cannons, there were some changes in the rhetoric situation. The interactions went from low to moderate and high levels, e.g. when the students were tasked with the assignment to create a short online publication and to comment on the posts of their schoolmates, a virtual discussion was simulated and moderated. The hybridity also moved from low to moderate and high levels, which is confirmed by the analysis of the screencasts of the students (as their final project). There are combinations of text with pictures, audio, video, hypertexts, etc. The transperancy levels drop due to their inversely proportional correlation to the hybridity. In other words, when different media modalities are combined the transperancy levels decline.

I could conclude that when there is a structured pedagogical rhetoric act in virtual environment, the rhetorical act defines the rhetoric situation, and not vice versa.

³⁴ Симеонов, Тодор. "Скрийнкастинг: трансформация на педагогическата презентация през погледа на киберетнографията." Електронно научно списание "Реторика и комуникации" бр. 20 (2015).

Alternatively said, the analysis of M. Hocks applied to the virtual pedagogical rhetoric situation reveals that it is vital for the teacher to have a prior knowledge and preparation for the virtual pedagogical rhetoric and for the pedagogical communication. There is a certain drawback from conducting a structured virtual pedagogical and rhetoric act – the spontaneity of the students to initiate informal communication in the virtual classroom drastically drops.

Skills for effective teaching

Grounding the following recommendations on the rhetoric analyzis of the five canons of rhetoric and their manifestation in the virtual environment, the teachers should:

Inventio

- Have knowledge and skills for using the webrowsers in an attempt to find adequate, up-to-date and trustworthy information; to find resources and materials that are to be used in their lessons in the physical/offline and in the virtual online environment.
- Know how to organize, cite and refer the materials they find on the web.

Dispositio

- Have knowledge and skills for using and organizing virtual learning spaces (classrooms), blogs and other virtual social platforms for educational purposes.
- Have knowledge and skills of using different pedagogical methods and genres of the virtual communication such as e-mail, post/chat discussions, assignments, quizzes, pools, etc.
- Have skills of organizing the pedagogical knowledge and rhetorical potential in texts, audio, video and multimedia formats multimedia presentations, screencasts, videocasts, etc.
- Have the ability to arrange adequately arguments, citation and other elements that are typical for the web content text, pictures, hypertext, hyperlinks, etc.

Elocutio

- Have knowledge of the rhetorical figures in their classical manifestation and the new forms at visual level – colors, pictures, video and multimedia, in order to create more affluent and impactful pedagogical content for the audience of virtual students.

Memoria

- Have knowledge of how to use different storage devices, cloud technologies and applications for recording, keeping and sharing virtual learning content.

Actio/Pronunciatio/Presentatio

- Have knowledge of the possibilities for sharing the pedagogical content through different platforms in virtual environment.
- Have knowledge of how to effectively influence the student audience on verbal, nonverbal and visual level.

The teacher is 'curating' the web pedagogical content, while going through the five steps of rhetoric in the virtual environment. The content could be textual, visual, audial, or a combination of different media, thus aiming at catering for the learning needs of the different students in his class. By acquisition of that knowledge the teacher is becoming a virtual teacher for knowing how to navigate his students in the virtual environment and the

students are becoming virtual students, not only because they are perceived, from a rhetorical standpioint, as an audience in the virtual environment, but because they inhabit this environment most of the time durng the day. The role of the teacher is to guide the proper use of the virtual space in order to let his students develop digital skills and to facilitate knowledge through an environment preferred by his students.

Skills for effective learning

The visual rhetorical analysis is based on the screencasts taken during the included virtual observation. The analysis shows that the students have a fairly good reception of the rhetorical content and its manifestation in virtual environment that is grounded in the five classical canons of rhetoric. There is also homogeneity in combining different modalities – text, pictures and other visual elemets, video, audio, hypertext and hyperlinks, etc.

The virtual students are primary users of the virtual space – they listen to music, watch movies, play games, but they also use the Internet in order to study, using different social media platforms such as Edmodo, YouTube, Wikipedia, Wattpad, etc. They read online, write their own text, blog, posts, etc., but they need further training and coaching in developing their digital skills to serve them better in the academic setting, as a ground for their future careers and life.

During the cyberethnographic observation in the virtual classroom Edmodo, the virtual students enhance their understanding and skills in finding materials and arguments (inventio) and in building structure of the different genres (dispositio). They easily learn how to use the search engines with keywords, to filter resources that are credible and scientific. They use different figures and tropes (elocutio) such as rhetorical questions, repetition, simili, anaphor, methaphor, etc. Most of them learn how to use different statistical in favour of their claims, they learn how to use hypertext and hyperlinks in order to create multimedia and interactive new genres. The new manifestation of memoria in the form of using technology to store and retrieve information in different cloud-based application (Edmodo Backpack, Google Drive, etc.) is also well-understood and utilized by the students. Some of the students need additional training in citing and creating lists of references. The students developed their skills in presenting in front of the camera, while using the screencasting technology to show their multimedia presentation and being conscious about their body language and voice.

Genres

As part of the rhetorical analysis of the genres used during the observation it was possible to make a list of the classical and new manifestation of the pedagogical rhetoric communication in the blended environment:

| Blended Teaching | | |
|------------------|-----------|--|
| In the classroom | Online | |
| Brainstorming | Poll | |
| Mind map | Post/note | |

| Discussion | Chat |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lecture | Assignment |
| Presentation (multimedia) | Quiz/Test |
| | E-mail |
| | Post/Chat Discussion |
| | Multimedia presentation |
| | Screencast |
| | Video/audio call |

Table 1
Genres of the classical and virtual pedagogic rhetoric

The genres in the physical classrooms are well-know: discussion, lecture, mind map and brainstorming methods, as sub-types of the discussion. We also find that the presentation are wide-spread teaching method and thus way a separate genre with tradition of using them in the brick-and-mortar environment.

The manifestations of the new pedagogical rhetoric are the post/note in blogs, social media and social networks; discussions in small groups, chats or post discussions; multimedia, video or screencast presetations; and other genres that are not typically rhetorical are the e-mail, poll, assignment and quiz/test, but they are well-established in the field of education. Based on the above-mentioned genres, a classification could be formulated, in which the main criterion is the function of the rhetorical and pedagogic act in the social platforms:

| Genre |
|-------------------------|
| E-mail |
| Post/note |
| Chat |
| Video call |
| Audio call |
| Poll |
| E-mail |
| Quiz/test |
| Post/note |
| Post/Comment discussion |
| Chat discussion |
| Video conference |
| Audio conference |
| E-mail |
| Multimedia presentation |
| Screencast presentation |
| Assignment |
| Quiz/test |
| Poll |
| |

Table 2

Classification of the different genres by functionality

There are four main functions recognized in the study: to inform/communicate; to gather opinions/feedback; to convince; to assess knowledge. Some of the genres has multiple functions and could have more then one role in the pedagogical communicative process.

Discussion and conclusion

The design of this research allows for deeper delving into the nature and functionalities of the pedagogical rhetoric in virtual environment. The teachers should be trained and prepared in order to cultivate digital rhetorical skills in the students, that way we could care for some of the deficits in the students' skills and take them on a journey from mere Internet user to profecionals that use the digital environment to their advantages, as they prepare for the requirements of the 21st century.

Although these findings are based on a particular case and object of research – the class taught by the blended method, partly in virtual environment, they have a high potentiality to be applied and replicated for other classes and students of different ages and at different academic levels – primary schools, high schools, colleges and universities.

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