

DETERMINED BY REASON: TEACHING RHETORICAL  
VIRTUE IN THE ETHICAL ENGLISH CLASSROOM

by

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## **DEDICATION**

To every student I have had or will have. Some of the most fulfilling moments of my life have been at your side as you discover your talents, your passions, your beliefs, your purposes, and your voices.

To my friends and colleagues who have been on the front lines of the fight with me. The world does not always treat you with the respect or appreciation you deserve, but you took me in and taught me so much through your compassion, tenacity, wit, wisdom, humor, and love. I would not be who I am today without your support and abiding friendship.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

I never wanted to be a teacher. My mother and sister, and, for a brief time, uncle and grandfather all taught or worked in classrooms ranging from elementary to high school and every time the topic would come up, I would emphatically say, “No, absolutely not. I do not have the patience for that.” But life loves nothing more than irony and making us eat our words, so I became a teacher. There were some detours along the way, but I got there in the end.

There are things in a classroom that no one prepares you for: how terrified you’ll be the first time you realize you’re alone in there and these kids are yours, the amount of time you’ll spend filling out paperwork completely unrelated to your lesson plans, how to respond to emails from angry or difficult parents and students, how funny and sweet high schoolers can be (sometimes entirely unwittingly), how much you’ll grow to love your students over the course of the year, how much parenting you’ll end up doing, and the acronyms. God, the *acronyms*.

Something else I wasn’t prepared for was how to teach rhetoric and composition to my students. I knew how to write, but I didn’t remember learning how to write well; I just could and so I did. Obviously, someone taught me how and I learned, but how did they do it? Eventually, I got the hang of it, more thanks to my mentors and some experience than any innate genius, but over the course of the first few years in the classroom, I’d like to think I figured it out. But here’s the thing about teaching - sometimes, even when you’ve got it figured out, things change and you have to learn how to do it all over again.

In the year leading up to and following the 2016 presidential election, rhetoric and public discourse took a hit. Absurdities, hate, incivility, and unaccountability were flying through debates, speeches, and news reports. It’s almost unnecessary to focus attention on one political faction or another because it seems the entire campaign-to-election trail was a verbal fistfight of



questionable facts, oversimplification, demonization, ad hominem, straw men, and red herrings. It was unsettling for many reasons, not the least of which was how polarizing statements like these and the issues attached to them came to be in everyday relationships and situations, but even more so the speed with which the rhetorics the candidates were espousing were picked up and replicated by people across the country. My high school students were no exception.

Students, teenagers to be exact, have always been sponges that soak up the culture of the day and wring it back out in the classroom. Just prior to this, in the beginning era of the YouTube star, many of their attempts at evidence for argumentative essays consisted of references to Jake and Logan Paul, James Charles, or PewDiePie. Students would use them as evidence for hard work, or not, or why learning is important, or not, or having a dream, or not. I had students making deals to follow each other's YouTube channels and imitating the speech and attitudes they saw on the social media platform. While frustrating and a little obnoxious, these instances of borrowed rhetoric and dialogue on my students were not ultimately harmful to their development or detrimental to their learning; a gentle reminder that perhaps a YouTuber famous for pranking strangers was not a contextually relevant piece of evidence for an essay about hardship was all it usually took to redirect them. Their capacity and understanding of the precepts of rhetoric remained intact.

Not so with the pre- and post-election rhetorics. Over the course of the year, our campus turned into a replica of the American political arena. Students, witnessing the incredibly highly publicized campaigns and clashes of the candidates on the news, absorbed everything; every xenophobic comment, every personal attack on a competitor, every grossly doctored fact, every goal post moved, every triumph of denial or dishonesty - everything. And what's worse, they saw these tactics, cheered on and applauded as 'honest' by millions around the country, *winning*.

The conclusion for the students, then, was that if these rhetorics and tactics won, they must be right. We saw bricks left on Hispanic teachers' desks or in front of their classrooms with notes telling them to get out before the wall was built, harassment of non-gender conforming and LGBTQ+ peers skyrocketing, and chants of "lock her up" for teachers they disliked during the passing periods. It wasn't politicians or news anchors doing that; it was children. Our students. Their imitation wasn't limited to behavior, either; we saw a marked increase in attitudes and writing that mimicked that of the election. It was always a bit of a struggle to get students to consider perspectives outside their own, but now it rose to an entirely different level. I had to learn all over again how to approach teaching students the principles of rhetoric when, so recently and publicly, those rules had been absolutely demolished and now seemed archaic and irrelevant. Try explaining to a sixteen-year-old why it's important to provide a fair representation of a counterargument in their writing, or why they should listen to people who disagree with them and imagine the argument from their situation. Now try explaining that to a sixteen-year-old wearing a MAGA hat in January of 2017.

We needed a way to bring students back to the focus and purposes of rhetoric, dialogue, and interpersonal communication. We needed a way to foster empathy and deliberation in a population that had seen very little of it. There were two problems facing us both then and now: firstly, the even more uphill battle of teaching students how to think and write with such poor examples being provided; and secondly, the understanding that what comes through the pipeline goes into the water supply. Students who are learning these negative tactics internalize them and carry them forward into greater pools of public discourse. The English Language Arts (ELA) standards required of teachers through the state of Texas do not sufficiently focus on the elements of rhetoric to provide a framework capable of addressing the breakdown and

degradations we have seen in the last decade. How can they when the ELA standards cover everything from literature, to analysis, to grammar and mechanics, to research, to speaking, and more? There simply isn't enough time in the school year to dive into the complexities and relevant mores of rhetoric when they must compete with everything else ascribed to the secondary English course. What we needed then we still need today: a better way. A way to stem the tide of toxic rhetoric and instill ethical practices in our students. We need to restructure rhetoric and composition instruction for secondary students in a way that highlights the responsible practices and virtues of rhetoric itself.

### **Why Virtue Ethics?**

As a foundation for classroom praxis, virtue ethics has been hotly debated in both academic and social spheres. The arguments generally revolve around the types of virtues that would be applied and whether or not it is even functionally possible to teach virtue in “isolation,” as it were. Other concerns include the potential for indoctrination, the efficacy of ethical instruction in a vacuum, and the development of discrete versus holistic *phronesis*.

Ultimately what is not up for debate, however, is the clear and deafening decay of private and public discourse, not only in this country, but also globally. In *Provocations of Virtue: Rhetoric, Ethics, and the Teaching of Writing*, John Duffy (2019) argues that polarization in the form of toxic rhetorics is functionally and inherently antithetical to discourse and that “we appear to have arrived at a historical and cultural moment in which there is little place in our civic arguments for deliberative language that might explore ambiguities, express doubt, admit error, or accommodate ideas that contradict our own,” placing us on the edge of a discursive crisis (p. 8). Duffy specifically critiques the incivility, hate speech, eliminationist rhetoric, venomous speech, and outrage discourse of, mostly political, rhetoric and discourse, labeling it

“toxic.” He includes in his argument such features as dishonesty, unaccountability, demonization, violence, denial, and poverty of spirit while providing a myriad of detailed examples of such features in recent years that are, while not new to American discourse, certainly “more consequential than in the past” (pp. 25-39).

As educators, we should ask, “consequential how and to whom?” As Edwin Black claims (and Duffy reiterates), toxic discourse is consequential because it invites us “not simply to believe something, but to *be* something” and provides “an identity to assume” (Black, p. 119). Thus, the consequence becomes the absorption and replication of that toxicity and further perversion of discourse, leading to a disturbing lack of ethical practice and engagement. As for whom, the most immediately pressing concern should be for those who are still learning how to *be* and who may accept the invitation toxic discourse has extended: our students. The ubiquity with which these rhetorics exist means that our students are surrounded by examples of what not to do cleverly disguised as the norm and expectation of rhetorical engagement. How can we expect them to recognize and avoid the trap if the trap isn’t a trap?

Eschewing the more traditional, and rigid, ethical operating systems of deontology and consequentialism, Duffy moves that a postmodern system, because it views ethics as “a process of negotiation among competing political and ideological interests,” is closest to the work and purpose of Composition Studies (p. 58). He does, however, also acknowledge that a system that outlines ethics as negotiation may not be adequate enough to address the “corrosive, post-truth, market-driven, public discourse that disdains evidence and fact-based argument generally” (p. 58). Linking these theories back to the practice of writing and the decisions writers constantly make in both their work and in defining themselves and their beliefs, Duffy ultimately concludes that a theory “grounded neither in terms of rules or consequences, nor in contingencies or

differences, but in the qualities of truthfulness, accountability, open-mindedness, and other such qualities that the ancients called ‘virtues,’” is the best place to begin forging a path to remedy the toxicity (p. 62). Additionally, it follows that the development and practice of a theory grounded in such principles would be functionally useless without the development of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, to guide the use and application of said virtues for the rescue of our current public rhetorical state characterized by polarization, violence, and the inability to engage in genuine discourses.

The challenge, then, becomes the transformation of these virtues from philosophical aether into measurable skill-based abilities for our students to engage and master, which, as it happens, is also a somewhat contentious idea. Can virtue and *phronesis* be reliably and consistently developed in a way that achieves mastery for students of writing in secondary level classrooms bound by standards that currently focus more on formulaic current-traditional rhetorical theories rather than an understanding of social constructivism and the complexities of discourse communities and responsible composition practices? A possible answer to this question has been discussed at length by scholars in recent years through what is known as the skill analogy, (Annas, 2011; Swartwood, 2013; Kristjánsson, 2014), but it ultimately begins where western moral philosophy began: Aristotle.

Aristotle makes clear in *The Nicomachean Ethics* that, contrary to intellectual virtue, moral virtues are not developed by instruction, but by habit, and “are engendered in us neither *by* nor *contrary* to nature; we are constituted by nature to receive them, but their full development in us is due to habit” (Penguin Classics, 2004, p. 31). If, as he argues, “we become just by performing just acts, temperate by performing temperate ones, brave by performing brave ones...[and] like activities produce like dispositions,” then, in theory, through the habituation of

rhetorical virtue we should absolutely be able to provide a balance to toxic rhetoric and discourse which, in this paper, is a balance I will refer to as *discursive* and *dialogic phronesis*, through practice and habit. However, as *phronesis* is considered the whole of the sum of the parts of virtue, or the mediator of the virtues rather than a discrete virtue itself, the question still remains regarding the ability to build an instructional framework that habituates not only rhetorical virtues, but also facilitates the ultimate end of practical wisdom.

While Aristotle claims that moral virtues are not developed by instruction, where else do we learn our habits if not through instruction by either society or in the classroom? Unless instructed by empirical observation or their mentors in the what and how in the first place, Aristotle's hypothetical builders and craftsmen would neither become good nor bad by habituation as they would have no guide from which to begin their practice. Teaching relies on the ability to isolate, quantify, and instruct practice in the concordant parts of a concept or skill, which means there must be an appropriate approach to the application of rhetorical virtue and *phronesis* that accounts for the complexity of both the virtues and their development. The skill analogy outlines and argues for the ability to develop moral virtues and *phronesis* similarly to concrete abilities in practice by experts of a domain. For example, as a builder might develop the individual skills necessary to build a "good" building, they must not only be able to make the right choices at specific moments regarding different elements of the construction, but they must also be able to consider what is "good" building and construction as a whole.

Jason Swartwood (2013) takes this concept and merges it with empirical psychological research on decision making and brings to the table the idea that *phronesis* is, in fact, achievable through similar methods. Agreeing with Duffy that, "while rules and principles of conduct are helpful for developing virtue, they are too inaccurate and inflexible to guide us well in all the

situations we encounter,” Swartwood turns away from consequentialist, deontological, and utilitarian frameworks in favor of what he calls the “expert skill model of wisdom” (p. 7). Because we need “an empirically plausible, philosophically sensible, and practically useful account of what wisdom is and how we can develop it,” Swartwood reviews previous theories on skill-based analogies for guidance and pinpoints as a flaw the lack of empirical research to support the realities of those theories. He makes up for this lack by integrating Naturalized Decision-Making Research (NDM) and the Recognition-Primed Decision model (RPD) into his own theory and argument. Swartwood defines “real world wisdom” as a

domain of complex choice: it is an area where the factors governing good decisions are many, varied and interact in complex ways, and a person needs to identify what to do with limited time and psychological resources [and] a domain of challenging performance: it is an area where successfully carrying out what is to be done requires sustained coordination of behavior, affect, and motivation in a way that does not come naturally to people and requires significant practice to achieve (p. 25).

These definitions might just as easily apply to rhetorical virtues and choices, making this framework ideal for the integration of Duffy’s proposed virtues into rhetorical education. My guiding research questions for this thesis are as follows:

### **Research Questions**

1. How do we determine what virtues are critical to the practice of rhetoric and how should we evaluate them for the formation of an ethical instructional framework?
2. How can we apply the skill analogy to ethical rhetorical instruction and learning in order to create implementable standards that target and support the development of rhetorical *phronesis* in students?
3. What is the feasibility of integration of this framework into Texas’, and by extension other similarly structured state education systems’, secondary writing instruction education?

4. If, despite its relevance and necessity, the standards will not fit into the existing educational system/framework due to the values of the state, etc., how might we overhaul composition instruction in order to do so?

## **Literature Review**

This crisis of the perversion and degradation of rhetoric in public arenas would appear to be best addressed via our core: Composition Studies. However, as an academic community, we may be ill equipped to address these issues. Why? Because we contributed, however inadvertently, to the problem in the first place by pushing ourselves into, as David W. Smit (2007) terms it, a “crisis of purpose” by spreading ourselves too thin and too far into theory and professionalism rather than focusing on the original end of Composition Studies, that is to say, the teaching of writing. By obfuscating the ultimate end of our discipline, we have neglected to communicate our “teleological reason for being” (p. 2).

By way of example, in reviewing criticisms against the “process approach” as a sort of repackaged “current-traditional rhetoric,” as well as debates surrounding “post-process,” “after theory,” and writing across the curriculum (WAC), Smit highlights the inability of scholarship to agree on purpose, practice, and pedagogy. At the first Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in 1950, President John C. Gerber remarked that despite “nine thousand of us teaching in college courses in composition and communication...we have for the most part gone our separate ways” (Gerber, p. 1). Smit identifies this as a problem of the discipline not only in 1950, but also today, in the more contemporary tracks Composition Studies has taken and the “lament that the profession has become too institutionalized, too specialized; that the profession has lost its roots in classroom practice” (Smit, p. 6). Smit questions whether “in the fifty years since the beginning of CCCC the field of composition studies has come any closer to



realizing its aspirations: to foster student writing through an intense focus on the students' own work, to develop a coordinated research agenda, and to raise the standards of the profession" (p. 5).

Essentially, because the field of Composition Studies contains so many sub-disciplines and explanations of theory, practice, and purpose (in many cases for the betterment of debate and discourse and intellectual activity), it dilutes our ability to work towards a common ideological goal, and so the impact of the discipline has been muted and muddled in execution. Scholars see our end differently, be it for the mechanical aspect of writing itself, or for self-discovery, or for participation in and negotiation of society and culture. We can't get our story straight which, to the rest of the world, means the lessons to be learned from that story are largely irrelevant. However, through a refocused ethical and virtue-based approach to writing instruction we might now reinvigorate those standards and, as a result, potentially produce students prepared to engage and diffuse the toxic rhetorics we have seen so prevalently in public and private discourse.

Following the social turn of the discipline, Smit argues, we have a much clearer understanding of what he refers to as "key tenets of the broad interdisciplinary consensus about how language works" which, to generalize, are focused on the contextual and interpretive nature of language and "in short...that meaning is a matter of interpretation, and that interpretation depends a great deal on matters other than language" (p. 9). However, the integration of this understanding into the structures of the discipline can also prove to be difficult "because of the nature of language and the ways we learn language," or, once again, a problem of context (p. 10). Smit sees the solution to this crisis of practice and purpose as "learning to put into practice what we often teach about language, that to effectively use language we must engage in dialogue and

negotiation” and to “radically restructure the way writing is offered” in order to acknowledge these tenets and problems (p. 12).

According to Irwin Weiser in “Ideological Implications of Social-Epistemic Pedagogy” (1992), approaches such as WAC alone are insufficient to address these problems of context and interpretation. Weiser points out that even with a “discourse conventions approach to WAC that teaches students to imitate...without also engaging them in a consideration of how these discourses reflect the values and assumptions about knowledge in these disciplines pretends that there is such a thing as a ‘value-free’ investigation of language” (p. 31). So, while WAC is a step forward in the sense of acknowledging that different discourse communities have specific practices and conventions and takes some problems of context into consideration, without examining the underlying causal links between convention and belief, it, like other rhetorical pedagogical practices taught in isolation, is not a viable solution to addressing the toxic rhetoric pervading our public and private social spaces. It does not acknowledge the “invitation to be” that has been extended to our students from the dysfunctional rhetorics prevalent today that is so tempting and pervasive.

A potential solution is to find a unifying perspective on our purpose through the practice of dialogue and negotiation. Duffy proposes that we have always had such a purpose and the language to enact that perspective though we must agree long enough to recognize it: ethics. The questions posed by ethics scholars are those that are naturally addressed through the act of composition. Indeed, as Duffy explains, “the very act of sitting down to write places before the writer and teacher of writing those questions that speak to the kinds of people we choose to be, the sorts of relationships we seek to establish with others, and the kinds of communities in which

we wish to live” (p. 11). The development of the individual through the work of those questions serves to engender *phronesis*: practical wisdom applied through action or virtue.

Although Aristotelian values may seem divorced from the modern world due to evolving complexities of context, identity, and moral philosophies, the skill of practical wisdom in determining means and ends in discourse and rhetoric has never been more relevant or, frankly, necessary. This purpose also addresses the complications Smit lays out through the focus of context and the “problems” of language and interpretation he refers to in his tenets. When we concentrate instruction on dialogue and negotiation, focused by questions of ethics, with the ultimate goal of practical wisdom, it follows that questions of context, social mores, interpretation, meaning, and examinations of value and belief will be undertaken. These concentrated and, almost more importantly, *deliberate* acts of questioning and examination are what can balance and oppose features of toxic rhetoric Duffy identifies that lead participants to ignore or dismiss elements of language and communication and belief that are so deeply complex and varied, ultimately leading to the oversimplifications, polarization, and viciousness we see today.

In “Cognition, Convention, and Certainty: What We Need to Know About Writing,” Patricia Bizzell (1992) takes one of the tenets generally agreed upon in the field that Smit refers to, namely that humans possess the natural ability to learn language and produce complex conceptual structures and that this capacity is performed in their native tongue and patterns of thought that “organize and interpret experience” (p. 76), and adds to that understanding with social caveats that are relevant to understanding the development, and potential dismantling of, toxic rhetorics. In reviewing the differences between “inner-directed” and “outer-directed” theories of composition processes, Bizzell posits that in order to truly understand those

processes, we need to hover somewhere in between the two camps, pulling understanding from both, but synthesizing those understandings through the correct social-constructivist interpretive lens. Essentially, the writer learns from the community not simply language, but “conventions” of practice (e.g., world view, what is appropriate, what is not), and that these conventions are “a historical process, changing over time” and are always conditioned by the “ongoing work in the community and sanctioned by consensus” (p. 88). As such, oftentimes instruction can, intentionally or otherwise, become “an agent of the cultural hegemony” (p. 99). Bizzell’s solution to treat this uncritical approach to writing instruction and student development is discourse analysis, which would lead to “world views [becoming] more clearly a matter of conscious commitment, instead of unconscious conformity” (p. 100), something desirable to counteract the “invitation to be” that Edwin Black identifies (p. 119). Consequently, because toxic rhetoric has become a “convention” of our larger discourse community, along with all its ugly hallmarks, students are constructing understandings about communication and language that are harmful; namely, that this is the way things are and should be. However, through discourse analysis and introduction of new “conventions” (i.e., ethical positioning), the standards and practices of the discourse community can be revised through that historical, changing process.

James Porter’s “Intertextuality and the Discourse Community” (1986) builds further on this possibility and puts a post-structuralist spin on these theories. In his analysis of intertextuality as a concept, Porter links it to discourse communities through the claim that because texts are created to communicate specifically to audiences, “the audience of each of these texts is as responsible for its production as the writer” (p. 38). This implies, similarly to Bizzell, that the more a student is exposed to or participates in a toxic rhetoric discourse community (pick one: social media, news media, political immersion, internet forums, etc.), the

more their texts, or thinking, will reflect the “community episteme” that “challenges the classical assumption that writing is a simple linear, one-way movement: the writer creates a text that produces some change in the audience. A post-structuralist rhetoric examines how audience (in the form of community expectations and standards) influences textual production and, in so doing, guides the development of the writer” (Porter, p. 40). Therefore, as Porter claims, the community can “encounter and learn new codes...intertwine codes in new ways, and...expand our semiotic potential - with [the] goal being to effect change” (p. 41).

However, Porter also discusses the idea that students need help coming out of the “pre-socialized cognitive state,” or a state in which students are not aware enough of or immersed deeply enough in the conventions of a discourse community to participate meaningfully in it: “they do not know what can be presupposed, are not conscious of the distinctive intertextuality of the community, [and] may only be superficially acquainted with explicit conventions” (p. 42).

When referring to academic discourse communities, as Porter seems to be, or the larger composition practices of the everyday world, the point about pre-socialized states may hold true. In reference to the toxic rhetoric discourse community culture that Duffy has outlined, however, this claim fails to land primarily because of the ubiquitous immersion in various forms of media that students are now accustomed to in their daily lives. Whether we recognize it or not, our students are already in a “post-socialized cognitive state” simply through their interactions with the pre-existing discourse communities created through this phenomenon. The ubiquity and seduction of these messages should only serve to strengthen our resolve to engender change. When we recognize that “the writer is constrained by the community, and by its intertextual preferences and prejudices, but the effective writer works to assert the will against those community constraints to effect change,” we can see a path forward that we, as a discipline, have

an ethical responsibility to follow (Porter, p. 44). After all, as Duffy puts it, “[w]ho is better positioned, then, intellectually and structurally, to influence the future of public argument in the United States than teachers of college writing? Who is more qualified? We have built in Writing Studies a dynamic enterprise, a powerful engine for shaping the way people speak, write, and argue” (p. 21). We are called to address the toxicity of discourse as it stands today *because* of our variances in experience and theory, not in spite of them.

Kristján Kristjánsson (2014), however, critiques the overall skill analogy for the development and refinement of wisdom. Firstly, these analogies do not account for the difference in *techne* and *phronesis* that Aristotle outlines, which is at best, even Kristjánsson admits, a semantic and not practical in modern interpretation objection. Secondly, and more robustly, he notes that “a fundamental problem with the skill analogy is that it underplays the scope of the complexities involved in *phronesis* acquisition,” referring specifically to the differences between *constitutive* and *integrative phronesis*, or the difference between wisdom in a particular virtue versus the integrative function of wisdom in “[adjudicating] when two different virtues, for example justice and compassion, collide” (p. 162). Thirdly, Kristjánsson objects that the “explanatory order” is in the wrong direction: “there is something decidedly odd, from an Aristotelian perspective, about the idea of domain-specific *phronesis* that is not founded on general *phronesis*” but rather the other way around (p. 164).

Kristjánsson’s objection here focuses on the perceived inability of *phronesis* to be developed from a single *techne* or domain, as it is about “the harmonious mastery of one’s *whole life*” (p. 163). He argues that even if we are to accept the idea that *constitutive* and *integrative phronesis* cannot be separated in development, as indicated by Julia Annas (2011), “it has to be shown that adequately learning a single skill also requires an all-round mastery of surrounding

life tasks” (Kristjánsson, p. 163). Finally, and coming to the crux of his argument, Kristjánsson concludes that reliably achieving *phronesis* through education requires “direct teaching about the nature of the well-rounded life, providing the learner with an indirect blueprint for *eudaimonia*” (p. 1).

While Kristjánsson’s objections have some grounding, I hypothesize that approaching the development and acquisition of *phronesis* from the expert-decision-making model Swartwood proposes and placing it securely in the domain of Composition Studies and, more specifically, rhetorical ethics, not only addresses these objections but creates an even more aligned argument for the ability to teach, through direct instruction and habituation, rhetorical virtues in the classroom with a success level similar to that of the RPD model. Additionally, as rhetorical virtue does not have an end goal of *eudaimonia*, but rather the rescue and preservation in practice of *discursive* and *dialogic phronesis*, Kristjánsson’s objections are limited.

## **Methods**

In my goal of using the theories outlined above to create an implementable set of standards in service of ethical rhetorical instruction, I will need to break my work into stages following the research questions outlined above. First, in Chapter II, through research, my own professional experience, and qualitative grouping of suggested virtues, I will evaluate virtues that likely facilitate *discursive* and *dialogic phronesis*, or put more simply, ethical rhetoric as hypothesized by Duffy, and that satisfy components for inclusion in an instructional framework.

Because my goal is to develop standards for use in a secondary level English classroom, I will then organize the suggested virtues into categories modeled after the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) language and organizational structure or stranding (e.g., foundational skills, response skills, composition, etc.). Duffy will serve as a guide here with his

“rhetorical virtues framework” of claims, evidence, counterargument, and revision and the subsequent skills he identifies within (pp. 96-117).

After identifying the virtues and organizational structure, I will move onto addressing my second research question and theorize how best to apply the skill analogy, illustrated through research on Recognition Primed Decision making (RPD). and determine its value to developing reliable rhetorical *phronesis*. Chapter III will offer a combination of research and theory application of both the skill analogy and underlying composition theory (post-structural, social constructivist, etc.), as well as address relevant objections to the skill analogy and its links to the development of *phronesis*. In Chapter IV, I will use Swartwood’s work to determine strategies most likely to create “sustained coordination of behavior, affect, and motivation” aligned with ethical rhetoric (Swartwood, 2013, p. 25) and evaluate their alignment to both composition theory and pedagogy.

Using the context of all the understandings of the previous chapters, I will, focusing on the purpose and function of the virtues selected, write a set of actionable standards for rhetorical instruction in the classroom and determine a structural organization designed to work as a curricular framework. Chapter V will conclude my work with an evaluation of the feasibility of the integration of my standards and framework into the Texas high school educational and instructional environment. Given my extensive knowledge of both regulatory standards, standardized testing practices and environments, and classroom instructional practices and realities, I will be able to determine whether implementation is realistic in our current educational state and reflect on the larger implications of the compatibility or incompatibility of my framework and design with existing Texas high-school standards and invite further scholarship.



## II. SEARCHING FOR VIRTUE

In Chapter I, I reviewed John Duffy's identification and classification of toxic rhetorics and discourse and argued for the necessity and responsibility of Composition Studies to address and counteract the problem from the position of virtue ethics. I then introduced the potential of rhetorical virtues to be taught reliably in secondary level classrooms using the skill analogy, with the ultimate goal of discursive and dialogic *phronesis*, and the essential understandings of language and discourse, specifically the inherent nature of discourse communities to impact and change both the writer and the audience, gained from the social turn of the discipline. In this chapter, I will move forward into a discussion and review of the nature and definition of virtue and habituation in service of selecting rhetorical virtues that can be used to build a framework. This framework will ultimately be modeled from the instructive strands of the Texas Essential Skills and Knowledge (TEKS) with the *teleos* of ethical instruction and will be applied using the expert skill model in an attempt to engender *integrative phronesis*. A part of this consideration must also be the application of postmodern ethics in pedagogy and writing instruction and the virtues inherent in rhetorical practice itself.

The first step in determining which rhetorical virtues can be used to create an instructional framework is threefold: we must identify what a virtue is and is not, we must understand habituation in the context of building skill, and we must examine the virtue inherent in rhetoric as a practice itself. These groundings will guide the selection and classification of virtues to be used in the development of instruction for and practice of ethical rhetoric.

A fruitful discussion of virtue with the aim of defining and determining relevant and practicable rhetorical virtues for an ethical framework must depart from Aristotle's original philosophy in two instances: 1) Aristotle's discussion of virtue in *The Nicomachean Ethics* is

positioned from his characterization of the “good” life and *eudaimonia*, or a pursuit of the highest good possible as worthy in and of itself and not reliant upon any end other *than* itself; 2) Aristotle draws a distinction between moral virtues and intellectual virtues. The reasons for these departures are firstly, that *eudaimonia* is not the identified goal of this work, and as such, is not relevant to the discussion. Secondly, this thesis draws no distinction between moral virtues and intellectual virtues, though the temptation may be to say that all rhetorical virtue is intellectual virtue by way of the actions that are performed in service of it. Ultimately, in service of *discursive* and *dialogic phronesis*, the virtues are considered independently of their traditional moral or intellectual categorization.

### **What Makes a Virtue?**

In *Intelligent Virtue* (2011), philosopher Julia Annas defines virtue as “a disposition of character to act reliably, not a passing mood or an attitude” that requires habituation similar to that of a skill “in which the agent becomes more intelligent in performance rather than routinized” (p. 4). To illustrate her point, she asks and answers what it is for Jane to be generous.

It is not merely that she does a generous action or has a generous feeling. Either or both could be true without Jane’s being generous. She may have done a generous action, suppressing her normal stinginess, in order to impress a friend who really is generous and will respond favourably to her action. She may have had a generous feeling triggered by a sentimental song she has just heard. In neither case is *she* generous, because the action and feeling neither come from nor lead to anything lasting. For Jane to be generous, generosity has to be a feature of *her* - that is, a feature of Jane as a whole, and not just any old feature, but one that is persisting, reliable, and characteristic. (p. 8)

Using this logic, it follows that in order to create ethical rhetoric, a virtue must be a *feature* of that rhetoric: persisting, reliable, and characteristic in the execution of its performance.

This leads us to a place that necessitates the other half of Annas’ definition of virtue: that it requires habituation similar to that of a skill “in which the agent becomes more intelligent in performance than routinized” (p. 4). Rather than relying on one-off choices that lead to a

virtuous outcome or are triggered to virtuous action by an emotional connection or agreeance in thought or are stumbled upon as a matter of rote mechanical function and indoctrination, the writer can reliably use rhetorical virtues to navigate with skill and appropriateness the changing landscapes of discourse they may find themselves engaged in.

But what makes habituation different than thoughtless habit or routine? Addressing the potential misconception of the difference between habituation and routine in relation to the development of applicable, reliable skills, Annas argues that the nuance between the two lies in the ability of the agent to perform and react skillfully and consciously when necessary. For example, when driving a familiar route, an agent must still be aware of that action in order to stop at lights or recognize dangerous drivers, etc. Over time that action can become “detached from [their] conscious thinking, and [their] conscious and deliberate thoughts may fail to be properly integrated” and penetrate the patterns of routine resulting in the inability to respond to a decision to act differently (p. 13). This performance of action without conscious thought which is characterized by an inability to appropriately respond to changes with intention is routine.

Habituation, alternatively, still relies on familiarity of action and knowledge, but fosters the ability to perform an action not simply with competency but with evolving skill and conscious choice. By way of example, Annas uses a pianist playing a sonata. Initially, a pianist may have to dedicate her full attention and ability to the playing of that piece, but over time “we might be tempted to think that constant repetition and habit have transformed the original experience, which required conscious thought, into mere routine”; however,

the expert pianist plays in a way not dependent on conscious input, but the result is not mindless routine but rather playing infused with and expressing the pianist’s thoughts about the piece. Further, the pianist continues to improve her playing. The way she plays exhibits not only increased technical mastery but intelligence - better ways of dealing with transitions between loud and soft, more subtle interpretations of the music, and so on (pp.13-14).

This illustration gives us concrete differences in the ends reached by habitation and routine: the ability of the agent to a) continue improving; b) evaluate changing elements of context; and c) initiate and execute conscious thought that impacts the action. Therefore, in reading Aristotle's claim that "the good for man is an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue" (Penguin Classics, p. 16), we can say that the good for a writer is the same, which functionally means that they have been able to habituate with compounding skill their dispositional virtue and apply it consistently with conscious thought in a manner that responds to the diversity of context and situation in which they find themselves.

The task set in this chapter is to determine which critical virtues are necessary for the performance of rhetoric and how we can evaluate them for the formation of an ethical instructional framework that necessitates selecting virtues consistent with ethical rhetorical practices. In turn, the application of these virtues will aid in the development of the practically and reliably wise rhetorician, or someone who displays and acts on *dialogic* and *discursive phronesis*. This understanding, paired with Annas' definition of virtue and habituation, suggests a set of requirements for the identification and selection of virtues to be considered for instruction in ethical rhetoric with a view to holistic, or integrative, rhetorical *phronesis*.

First, any virtue selected should be able to be habituated to the point that it can become a feature of the writer's rhetoric itself—reliable, consistent, and characteristic—which means that it must be taught through situations that are encountered frequently enough outside of the classroom to become absorbed and internalized. Second, the selection must take into account the requirement that "[s]killed dispositions are not static conditions; they are always developing, being sustained or weakened" (Annas, p. 14), which means that the virtues selected must always have some degree of complexity when applied, such that it is not possible for rote application in

practice or thought; they must be virtues that necessitate deliberate choice, consideration, and context so “[t]he practical mastery is at the service of conscious thought, not at odds with it” (Annas, p. 14). Finally, the virtues must be considered and selected using the problem of the thesis itself: toxic rhetorics and discourse. In order to construct a framework for instruction that provides a holistic counter to the features of toxic rhetoric, virtues that create a space for the writer to make choices in line with the good of the soul of rhetoric and discourse must be the focus.

### **Complications of Postmodern Ethics**

Here, we must pause and consider postmodern ethics and its relationship to virtue ethics, toxic rhetoric, and discourse. That there is “danger inherent in the unscrupulous use of rhetoric” is becoming clearer than ever (Herrick, 1992, p. 133). As John Duffy argues, we have arrived at a place historically and culturally that allows for very little opportunity to engage in ethical discourse due to the overwhelming prevalence of the features of toxic rhetoric: incivility, hate speech, eliminationist rhetoric, venomous speech, outrage discourse, dishonesty, unaccountability, demonization, violence, denial, and poverty of spirit. “The result is arguments reduced to assertions and counter-assertions, claims and counterclaims, often expressed in language that is shrill, irrational, duplicitous, and violent” (p. 8). However, “as teachers of writing we are *always* and *already* engaged in the teaching of rhetorical ethics” (p. 11). We are called to address this degradation and subversion of the art, but addressing it begins by asking “what does it mean to be an ethical speaker and writer in conditions of strident polarization, economic inequality, mass incarceration, and environmental destruction? What sorts of arguments would the ethical speaker or writer make in addressing these conditions? What stories

would she tell? What principles would guide her choice of metaphors, analogies, allegories, or ironies?” (Duffy and Agnew, 2020, p. 4)

We thus arrive at a merging of two standards. Postmodern ethics, characterized by “an emphasis on the salience of the writer’s position, the contingency of received doctrines, the role of ideology in framing moral choices, and the workings of power in shaping rhetorical and social interactions...represent...the postmodern conception of the good, with the good writer construed as one who can absorb and articulate the fragmented moral landscape” and offers a way not to repair the fractures and fissures of the modern world, but to navigate among them (pp. 58-59). Ultimately, however, the aim of a framework for virtue-based rhetorical instruction is to give students a way not just to navigate *through* the blasted-out minefield of toxic discourse today, but to *counter* it.

Therefore, “[p]erhaps a fresh view of rhetorical ethics is needed, one that starts with the practice of rhetoric itself rather than with abstract values that do not garner general agreement in controversies over the most perplexing moral dilemmas facing us,” or, as Herrick suggests “[the] grounding [of] an ethic of rhetoric in virtues suggested by the practice of rhetoric itself” (p. 133). So, while as teachers of writing we have led the charge for students to be critical, to “deconstruct, unmask, destabilize, and distance,” to examine the power structures that be and their roles in shaping the world with a critical eye and a healthy dose of skepticism, we need to incorporate “another language for deliberating over ethical choices - a language that expresses not only the values of contingency, difference, and critique, but one that can speak beyond these to the values of connections, reciprocities, and interdependencies among peoples of diverse and often conflicting ideologies and values” (Duffy, p. 60). We need to be able to “equally articulate the ethical discourses of affinity, solidarity, and empathy” (Duffy, p. 60).

The suggestion of the practice of virtue ethics does not exclude, however, those standards to which rhetoric has accustomed our arguments and still provides a way to combat the “dishonest language of post-truth, alternative facts, and other practices of disinformation...in contexts of oppression and disinformation, for example, skepticism, righteous anger, and resistance are also virtues” (Virtue Ethics, 2018, p. 323). Thus, when seeking virtues, we must focus not only on the definition and action of virtue itself, but on those that are critical to the opposition of the features of toxic rhetoric. For the demonization of others, we must provide counters of empathy and integrated perspectives. For dishonesty, we must balance the narratives with accountability and the examination of truth and integrity. For venomous speech, we must instill in our students a respect for their opposition as an integral part of the conversation. For violence, we must condemn and draw the line.

James A. Herrick’s “Rhetoric, Ethics, and Virtue” (1992) presents the case for some virtues critical to the practice of rhetoric itself: “it is rhetoric’s capacity to gain compliance and cooperation without violence or coercion that has rendered the art invaluable to free societies. But rhetoric’s value as persuasive and adversarial discourse is directly proportional to the willingness of rhetors to pursue the art within acknowledged ethical boundaries” (p. 134). For example, while much of the problematic rhetoric we see now is focused on victory, ideological hegemony, and either-or dilemmas, the true nature of rhetoric is intended to, rather, test propositions in controversy, air disagreements, perpetuate political discourse, advocate ideas, and refine positions to “actually enhance its moral character for all members of society” (p. 134). We can (re)discover the virtues of ethical rhetoric by examining the goods internal to the practice; internal to the practice being goods that are “resulting from the practice as that practice,

consequences of its very nature, goods not obtainable in other ways...[that] are also good for those who participate in the practice” (p. 143).

Some such goods, Herrick suggests, lie in Richard Johannesen’s argument regarding communication ethics which highlights a “focus on the attitudes toward each other held by participants in a communication transaction,” or, dialogic perspectives that hold “genuineness” or “empathy” foremost while “[m]onological communication marked by self-centeredness and deception, on the other hand, is said to be unethical” (p. 135). Still more goods are found in rhetoric’s nature to be persuasive and adversarial; for in persuading, the rhetor must “discover facts, truths, evidence and maxims relevant to the resolution of controversial issues,” and “to articulate views, to interpret and clarify concepts” they are advocating.

In taking adversarial positions, they must refine theses, discard vulnerable ideas, and promote new insights without requiring aggression, hostility, or the pursuit of conquest. Instead, “by nature rhetoric insists on the possibilities of considered disagreement, critical examination, rational doubt, and verbal challenge” (p. 143). Therefore, the “goods” (virtues) inherent to rhetoric are “in sum: (1) discovering truths and arguments relevant to decision making on contingent issues, (2) advocating, interpreting and propagating ideas before publics, and (3) defending propositions in debate” (p. 144). So, any selection of virtues must follow not only Annas’ definition and categorization of virtue as persistent, reliable, characteristic, allowing for the development of increased skill and capacity for conscious thought to guide their practice and application, but also follow and propagate the inherent goods of the discipline as outlined by Herrick and be practicable enough both in and out of the classroom to form habituation.



## Finding Virtue

In service of determining which virtues may be considered for an ethical instructional framework, I will evaluate virtues that satisfy components for inclusion in a virtue-based instructional framework for rhetoric and categorize them according to levels of articulable skills (e.g., foundational skills, response skills, composition, etc.) that facilitate *discursive* and *dialogic phronesis*, or put more simply, ethical rhetoric as hypothesized by Duffy. Because my goal is specifically to inform secondary English instruction, these will eventually be divided and modeled in language in keeping with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) format.

We begin with a qualitative review of virtues suggested by prominent scholars in the field from the following texts: *Provocations of Virtue: Rhetoric, Ethics, and the Teaching of Writing* (Duffy, 2019), “Virtue Ethics” (*Rhetoric Review*, 2018), and “Rhetoric, Ethics, and Virtue” (Herrick, 1992). These suggestions will be supplemented by my own insight and experience from the last ten years in the classroom as a teacher of writing and my observations on the state of students’ rhetorical abilities and groundings today. I will then evaluate virtues against the requirements identified in the previous section and determine their inclusion in the instructional framework. This process will also take into account the author’s arguments for the virtues themselves, the definitions of them in the rhetorical space, and the function of the virtue in order to give full understanding for their inclusion or dismissal from the framework.

Each work will have a corresponding table that breaks down the considered virtue, the author’s argument for the virtue as a good internal to the practice of rhetoric, and a practical definition of that virtue that will aid in my end review for the inclusion or exclusion of the proposed virtues for my instructional framework.

## Duffy's Provocations of Virtue

Beginning with Duffy's *Provocations of Virtue* (2019), he focuses on the practices of argument to discover the "goods" internal to that practice—the virtues of argument so to speak. Dividing them into claims, evidence, counterargument, and revising, Duffy considers what the nature of each practice is, and what critical rhetorical virtues are exhibited when engaging in that practice (p. 98).

**Table 1: Provocations of Virtue: Rhetoric, Ethics, and the Teaching of Writing (2019)**

<b>Claims</b>	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Truthfulness	Claims require trust on the part of the writer and reader: trust that the claim will be considered; trust that the claim is not deceptive or duplicitous. Relates to judgment, skepticism, questioning. In order to achieve this, the virtue of truthfulness (rhetorical honesty) must be enacted.	Aiming consistently to speak so as not to mislead others; opposite of mendacity, duplicity, distortion; avoidance of lies, dissembling, equivocation.  Not a virtue of absolutes - makes allowances for error, mistakes in judgment, etc.
Good Faith	Claims initiate the relationship between the reader and writer and as such are social actions that need to be made in good faith to enact dialogue and discourse; they are a calling out for connection; a particular way of making sense of things. So long as a claim can be judged to have been made and received in good faith, the possibility of dialogue exists.	The confidence of the reader and writer in making certain assumptions about each other; reader: claims are made without equivocation or deception; writer: readers will judiciously consider the ideas advanced in the claim
<b>Evidence</b>	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Accountability	Presenting evidence in support of claims requires verification; examination of how beliefs and values support selection; what evidences may be accepted and supported in discourse communities; ethics of finding and using evidence (attribution); we teach the ethical commitments inherent to the action; community building	A presumption that someone can be called to answer, to stand before others for an examination and judgment upon his or her behavior
<b>Counter Arguments</b>	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Open Mindedness	Compels the writer to deepen their knowledge of the issue by exploring it from multiple perspectives; strengthens ethos by demonstrating willingness to	The ability to listen carefully, the willingness to take what others say seriously, and, if called for, the

	<p>consider views that differ from their own; demonstrates the writer is imaginative, argues rather than holds opinions, considers rather than asserts, strong enough to face uncertainty and complication; demands that writers represent views as their authors would represent them, listen to different points of view, respect arguments that diverge from their own, willing to exchange ideas and revise their point of view.</p> <p>Requires informed judgements about intellectual challenges to consider seriously, discrimination, judgment, fairness. Initiates reflection as to how ideas that contradict our own may help us better understand the truth of a given issue. Calls us to read in a spirit of confidence and goodwill.</p>	<p>resolve to adopt [others' positions] as one's own; a readiness to hear the other side, suspend one's own beliefs at least temporarily, refrain from making premature judgments</p> <p>Resists narrow mindedness, prejudice, dogmatism. Demonstrates qualities of receptivity, tolerance, perhaps empathy.</p> <p>An attitude toward oneself as a believer rather than any particular belief. Willing to acknowledge the possibility of error/wrongness.</p>
Intellectual Generosity		<p>A generosity of spirit and understanding, crucially involving sympathy and understanding; taking others' ideas seriously, avoid characterizing others in mocking or abusive language; how we think of the merit of another's work</p>
Intellectual Courage		<p>Engaging in conflicting views, read without bias or rancor, acknowledge the possibility of error/wrongness and the arguments of the other side</p> <p>Willingness to address ideas or beliefs that may be uncomfortable, offensive, or antithetical to one's own</p>
<b>Revision<sup>1</sup></b>	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Collaboration <sup>2</sup>	<p>Involves us in relationships with others; expected to speak candidly and critically; must listen as well as speak; speak in language that critiques but is free of personal criticism.</p> <p>Requires engagement of others in discussion of deficiencies; calls upon us to confront inadequacies as writers; requires honesty and determination;</p>	<p>Engaging in relationships with others that are mutually respectful and honest; promotes reflection and diplomacy while building understanding<sup>3</sup></p>

<sup>1</sup> Revision is explained to also re-engage previous virtues as it involves previous elements of argument (ex: intellectual courage).

<sup>2</sup> Collaboration, while not explicitly defined in terms of a virtue, is explained as involving writers in relationships with others. Contains other dependent virtues that are not individually elaborated upon in this text but may be understood to be interpreted in the context of the other virtues.

<sup>3</sup> Definition synthesized from elements of Duffy's commentary over revision processes and activities/intent as a whole.

	includes humility, empathy, diplomacy	
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## Virtue Ethics

“Virtue Ethics” (2018) is a collection of essays addressing various concepts of rhetorical virtue that do not work together as parts to a whole, but rather explore a variety of suggested virtues in theoretical, critical, and practicable terms. Each essay addresses a different element of rhetoric that might or might not be considered as a virtue in the modern context of “an era of disinformation, propaganda campaigns, and outright lies [where] vagaries and uncertainty abound” (p. 323). The purpose of the collection is not to arrive at consensus on a list of immediately enactable virtues, but rather to negotiate an understanding of “the nature, enactments, effects, and ends of selected virtues...[T]he treatments that follow are exploratory and experimental, an effort to introduce and understand effects of given [rhetorical] virtues” (p. 323). John Gage writes on *phronesis*; Lois Agnew reflects on intellectual humility; John Schlib highlights the importance of nuance; Steve Holmes and Jared Colton address honesty; Caddie Alford looks at temperance; John Duffy considers tolerance and principled intolerance; Lauren Cagle evaluates civility; John Gallagher identifies the use of exemplars; and Scot Barnett addresses the end of *eudaimonia*. The following table identifies each virtue addressed in the symposium, as well as summarizes the argument for the virtue as necessary, and contains a synthesized definition, or defining elements of the virtues.

**Table 2: Virtue Ethics (2018)**

Considered Virtue	Argument for Virtue as Internal Good	Definition
<i>Phronesis</i>	Requires the rhetor to mediate between extremes: how one judges the particulars unique to a situation and the entirety of what one understands about the universe - takes	The ability necessary to make informed judgements about the whole rhetorical situation one is in relative to one’s own beliefs and

	<p>place in absence of absolute certainty</p> <p>Knowledge of the means, foresight as to desirable and possible ends, discernment of how these may be brought into harmony, the will to act (rhetorically) with confidence but without certainty, taking the risk of being ineffective or unbelievable despite one's best efforts. Connects all such considerations (<i>previous</i>) to those of the good in general.</p> <p>More than knowledge of any number of discrete formats, but an ability to create unique formats adequately adapted to particular rhetorical situations - a "sense of form" - tacit understanding of when to use, adapt, or create, and why to do so. Organic and generative, deriving from exigencies of situation, possibilities available, choices and preferences of speaker or writer. Requires empathy and ability to create links between self and other in the moment when links are needed.</p> <p>Mediates between theory and practice.</p> <p>Allows rhetor to deal with problems as they come to us - ill-defined, urgent, not fully knowable which places rhetor in situation without certainty according to analogs and scenarios.</p>	<p>needs and the beliefs and needs of others, and about the selection and disposition of rhetorical means to adequately address the exigencies of those situations</p> <p>More than knowledge of what the choices are, more than a tendency to make certain kinds of choices, more than clear-headed purpose, more than impulse to speak and conviction about what to say or accomplish by saying it. The "good sense" of the good of being able to do all or any of these well.</p> <p>Kind of intelligence that discerns good ends as well as good means and facilitates their reconciliation in practical actions.</p> <p>Neither theory nor practice, neither wholly abstract nor wholly particular, but the wisdom required to unite them into effective action.</p>
Intellectual Humility	<p>Dialectic relies not on certain truths, but on "the wisdom of the perfect orator" who is thoughtfully engaged in deliberative processes that lead to informed decisions</p> <p>Argument as a practice of radical humility - offering ideas up for scrutiny, criticism, rejection, ridicule</p> <p>(Argumentation) Awareness of limitations allows pursuit of through knowledge that enables contribution to conversation, establishing trusting relationships with others, and cultivate "deep confidence" that emerges from awareness of the value of engaging with a given network of ideas</p> <p>Rhetoric historically has a role in fostering the exploration of multiple possibilities, opening the path to considering diverse perspectives, and developing strategies for evaluating evidence and determining</p>	<p>An accurate or modest assessment of one's own intelligence, being receptive to the contributions and ideas of others, and being able to accept criticism of one's own ideas</p> <p>Easily accepting or exposing one's own ignorance rather than denying or covering it up</p> <p>Recognizing one's fallibility as a knower. The serious practice of the idea that you could be wrong.</p> <p>Ethical engagement with outside perspectives and respectful discourse/dialogue</p>

	<p>probability.</p> <p>Rhetoric encourages critical interrogation of civic discourse to prepare for productive engagement with complex issues; offers strategies for argumentation that include attentiveness, listening, mutual understanding.</p> <p>Meaningful discourse is grounded in respect, through consideration of others' points of view and an awareness of the complex factors that shape all interactions through language and symbols</p>	
Nuance	<p>Critical examination of texts and argument engenders ability to identify "not A, not B, not C, but actually D" (insights more acute)</p> <p>Rhetoric calls for precise examination of language, order, context, difference</p> <p>The practice of writing and revision creates first identification and then ability to restate with more exactness</p> <p>Positioning in situations/context encourages rhetors to identify, determine, and define/explain "degrees of accuracy," shades of meaning, precise truth.</p>	<p>Writing with precision, complexity, depth</p> <p>Shrewd deployment of style</p> <p>Attempting to complicate other writers' positions</p> <p>Deliberate challenge to broad generalizations, pat conclusions, flip dismissals, thin clichés</p>
Honesty	<p><i>(informed by the context of social media/technological rhetorical spheres)</i></p> <p>Aristotle (classical rhetoric) was more focused on the habit-formation (habituation) that motivates the right action and, by extension, signals the existence of a disposition that will tell the truth to the right audience at the right moment across concrete and flexible rhetorical situations</p> <p>Rhetoric has a historic mandate to investigate the available means of persuasion for a given set of circumstances - social media has offered us a new way to evaluate this ability and practice relative to facts versus honesty</p> <p>We must increasingly ask ourselves how social media and other technologies affect our ability to discern truth content, how and when to share it, and to whom.</p> <p>Allows us to look beyond the mere</p>	<p>More than truth-telling or narrow appeals to information transparency</p> <p>A capacity and practice of practical reasoning that takes the form of a respect for truth's relationship to integrity and trust, particularly in ways appropriate to "techno social contexts"</p> <p>A flexible mode of discernment particular to the unique and concrete situations in which individuals find themselves</p> <p>The ability and the habit to see and reflect upon which situations call for honesty, knowing what truths should be communicated in a given situation, to whom one should communicate those truths in that situation</p>

	association of honesty with truth-telling and, instead to interrogate the dispositional forces - social and technological - in which the truth claim emerged	
Temperance	<p><i>(informed by the context of social media/technological rhetorical spheres)</i></p> <p>Rhetorical practice today manifests also the impulsive retweeting of an article or a quick Google rating of a restaurant (becomes concealed by its chaotic everydayness)</p> <p>Aristotle's theory of virtue as mean between two extremes</p> <p>Our interaction with online/social media/technological rhetoric demonstrates habitus (<i>relies on bodily rhetoric/embodied rhetoric here</i>)</p> <p>Practicing social media habits with others can lead toward a happy temperance - learning how to touch and taste exactly what we need</p> <p>Despite the Aristotelian ideal of virtue as recognized in an individual and isolated from the community to which the good is for, social media conditions have necessitated a change in our habits - contemporary virtues (temperance) must develop out of virtuous ways to care for a self among selves</p>	To host a balanced appetite within both a personal and a communal body that knows, or can at least intuit, what pleasures and fuel it will need to thrive for the sake of the good itself.
Tolerance/Principled Intolerance <sup>4</sup>	<p>Rhetoric/writing classrooms teach the necessary art of compromise, community, and peaceful co-existence that enable peoples of antithetical values to live side-by-side but also teach students when and how to reject tolerance in favor of principled intolerance</p> <p>Use of Socratic questioning/guided questions to explore ideas, examine problems, and challenge assumptions to arrive at the best understanding of the truth:</p>	<p>Tolerance: the social virtue and the political principle that allows for the peaceful coexistence of individuals and social groups who hold different views and practice different ways of life</p> <p>Tolerance: participants recognize the limits of knowledge and share a commitment to engage together in the process of questioning while allowing one another to disagree.</p>

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<sup>4</sup> Here, Duffy argues that tolerance, due to its potential to morally compromise the tolerant and reinforce the relationships of the dominant and dominated/colonizer and colonized, as well as its potential to build mutual resentment, may not be the full scope of the virtue. Rather, it is and must be paired with *intolerance* in order to “offer guidance to students on when to respect, and when to withhold respect; when to engage and when to reject engagement; when to suffer, endure, or put up with, and when to refuse these.”

	<p>emphasize the power of questioning ideas and negotiating contradictory thoughts</p> <p>Conversations require listening to perspectives we don't share, consider ideas found offensive, engage in dialogue; encourages a tolerant community - conflict is neither obscured nor denied, becomes a motive and provides incentive for dialogue, exchange, reflection, and new forms of understanding</p> <p>Writing groups foster both tolerance and intolerance: must listen to critique, opposing arguments, etc. However, when encountering arguments they find morally unacceptable (racism, misogynist, homophobic, argue against their existence) we do not ask that they tolerate these. We affirm in condemning and rejecting those discourses - we model the attitudes, habits, and dispositions of intolerance.</p>	<p>An end, not a means.</p> <p>Principled Intolerance: the rejection of tolerance and engagement with opposition in light of morally objectionable, intolerable, or condemnable, action or rhetoric</p>
Civility	<p>Treating opposition civilly (with good faith, assuming intelligence of interlocutor) is more likely to keep discourse from disengaging</p> <p>Responsive to deliberate subversion and manipulation</p> <p>Confronts brute force with reason; distinguishes democracy from tyranny</p> <p>Prevents positions from becoming even further polarized</p> <p>Incivility doesn't prevent conversations/dialogue, it prevents constructive deliberation - participants retreat to their identities further</p>	<p>A set of behaviors, and particularly communicative ones, which convey a sense of good manners and respect for others. Suggested to be contextually specific.</p> <p>Tied to broad civic goals, offering standards of behavior that serve the ideals of public discourse</p> <p>A sincere disposition to live well with one's fellow citizens of a globally networked information society: to collectively and wisely deliberate about matters of local, national, and global policy and political action; to communicate, entertain, and defend our distinct conceptions of the good life; and to work cooperatively toward those goods of techno social life that we seek and expect to share with others</p> <p>Goal is to safeguard the possibility of a common social life together</p>
Exemplars	We learn through narratives of both fictional	People who take action, make



	<p>and nonfictional persons that some people are admirable and worth imitating, and the identification of these persons is one of the pre theoretical aspects of our moral practices that theory must explain</p> <p>Practices, and the communities that surround them (rhetoric/dialogue) provide us with examples of virtues through the values of a particular community's practices: both individually and community-based</p> <p>In creating a community of practice, exemplars are used to shape the function</p>	<p>choices, and have a sense of proper motivation with respect to a particular disposition</p> <p>Possess a unity of thought, word, and deed that syncs up with a community and its practices; held accountable both to themselves and to a broader community</p>
<i>Eudaimonia</i>	<p>The contextual social, political, and environmental changes brought on in the Anthropocene create situations in which we must face an existential crisis in regard to living well/happily, but one in which we can create dialogue with community in order to determine our ends</p> <p>Provides a greater awareness of "sensitivity" - of how actors in networks are differently sensitive to other actors in that network</p>	<p>Not a passive or temporary mood - something we do and must continue to practice in accordance with virtue</p> <p>Communal as much as individual achievement</p>

### **Rhetoric, Ethics, and Virtue (1992)**

James A. Herrick considers the connection between virtues and rhetoric in an attempt to discover the goods internal to the practice of rhetoric and identify rhetorical virtues. He leans heavily on work by Alasdair MacIntyre here, as well as other scholars in an attempt to suss out specific elements of rhetoric that imply a standard of excellence. The review that follows will exclude the elements discussed previously in relation to defining the standards for virtues in conjunction with Annas (2011). The following table identifies each virtue Herrick identifies, as well as summarizes his argument for the virtue as an internal good, and contains a synthesized definition, or defining elements of the virtues.

**Table 3: Rhetoric, Ethics, and Virtue (1992)**

Considered Virtue	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Honesty	Necessary in order to accept the risks associated with advocacy of one's position, particularly when it is a dangerous or unpopular one ( <i>associated here with courage and candor</i> )	The steady regard for others that leads us to use language truthfully and thereby make possible a common life  A fidelity to what is the case, a tendency to not willingly mislead, and generally a regard for what is, or what one takes to be true
Acumen <sup>5</sup>	The practices of invention, style, arrangement, etc. sharpen acumen (wit) via necessity and practice	The sort of mental and verbal agility characteristic of skilled rhetors  Inventional skill of coming up with arguments as well as rational capacities to track and evaluate arguments, identify evidence, and assess cases
Cooperation	Rhetoric as persuasive and adversarial requires cooperation to achieve its goods.  Simply the agreement to engage suggests two values are held: the value for the interactive reasoning process and the value for the rhetorical context or the context of a free exchange of arguments  Rhetoric requires that regard be exhibited in the conduct of argumentation	Agreement to engage rather than resolve disagreement by some other means such as coercion or violence  Respect for other rhetors as givers and hearers of reason and respect for contexts in which reason can be given and heard

## A Resumé of Experience

Over the course of my time as a teacher of writing in secondary classrooms, nearly a decade, I've spent approximately 15,000 hours working directly with students who represent

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<sup>5</sup> Sub-virtues of acumen include attentiveness to issues, inquisitiveness to investigate questions, discernment of reasoning errors, and articulateness to defend a position

every sphere of rhetorical space. My students have been conservative, liberal, anarchic, oblivious, and independent. They have been gifted writers, second language learners, dyslexic, and budding poets. They have been witty, dull, concise, long-winded, and blank. They have been the majority, the minority, the ostracized, the under-the-radars, the aggressive, the passive, the bewildered, the curious, and the apathetic. While their individual relationships (or battles) with writing all look a little different, what has been a constant is the ever-increasing struggle to counter the effects that absolutist, polarizing, aggressive, and disengaged rhetorics so prevalent in social, political, and online communities today have on them and their developing rhetorical practices.

*Ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* are never the problem, save for the confusion between the three when students attempt to identify them. Identifying a thesis or a line of reasoning can be difficult, but these are surmountable problems remedied with time, attention, and practice. What troubles me, and, I feel comfortable saying, all of the teachers I've worked with, the most is the damage these toxic rhetorics students have been immersed in their whole lives have on their ability to think outside themselves, to empathize with others, and to understand, or even consider, a perspective outside their own or their community's. The effect of toxic rhetorics in isolating students' focus on only their own goals or wants or needs has severely compromised their abilities to engage in productive, extended discourse, consider implications, and anticipate or evaluate counter arguments with any degree of good faith.

My position here stems from my observations, interactions and relationships with, and instruction of every kind of student in every possible combination. I've taught special education students, English language learners, on-level students, and gifted and talented students in interventional boot-camps, in block schedules, in tutorials, in remote or hybrid settings, in power

outages and in literal floods. I have been working with students to absorb and refine the concepts of rhetoric and composition my entire professional career; therefore, in addition to the virtues outlined from the scholars and works above, my contributions to the list of suggested virtues stem from the collective understandings I've accrued over the last decade.

The following table is similar in style to the previous tables; I've synthesized my argument for the considered virtue as an internal good and, thus, its necessity to ethical rhetorical instruction as well as constructed a definition for the virtue to solidify understanding.

**Table 4: An Experienced Teacher's Paradigm**

Considered Virtue	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Appropriateness	<p>The nature of discourse and engagement necessitates and habituates a sense of evaluation that the rhetor uses to determine the Ws: to whom should I speak, when is the right time, where should I aim my points, etc.</p> <p>The situational nature of rhetoric and the dynamic spheres in which we practice (and teach) it make this ability a foundational one. Not only when is it appropriate to speak, but when one must speak or when one must create space for someone else to speak or stay silent altogether.</p> <p>The questions posed by rhetoric and the communities crossed and touched create the space for the development of this virtue and make it invaluable to ethical rhetoric.</p>	<p>The action of the rhetor to evaluate contexts and situations of speaking/writing/engagement in order to determine</p> <p>a) the level of necessitation of their involvement;  b) the times in which it is imperative to speak or let others speak; and,  c) the approach to encourage or end further discourse as necessary</p>
Constructive	<p>Voice does not exist in a vacuum - all rhetoric presupposes the existence of at least one other idea/position/interlocutor.</p> <p>Central to the nature of rhetoric, dialogue, dialectics, etc. is engagement. Addressing counter arguments, making claims, tailoring</p>	<p>An understanding of and action in accordance with the ideals of productive discourse, discovery of truths, and establishing/maintaining of relationships between parties (rhetors).</p> <p>The action of the participants to construct not only arguments in</p>

	speech to audience, and timing is all in support of continued engagement. A core virtue of rhetoric, then, is that it must be constructive in the sense that it builds - to continued dialogue, to the betterment of the community, to the solving of a problem, to the practice of the actor, etc.	<p>response to opposition or criticism, but to build a continuation of discourse and thought in a forward manner.</p> <p>This also encompasses the ability to recognize when constructive means the end of engagement of ideas that are not in good faith or are harmful to the ultimate goods of community, individual development, or contextual relevance.</p>
Empathy	<p>Again, rhetoric and dialogue are built on precepts of engagement and continuation/growth/movement towards “the good.” In order to accomplish this, by way of example, in argument - the writer/speaker must hear and evaluate the perspectives, claims, situations, and beliefs of others in order to determine a path forward or to evaluate their existing position. Sympathy assumes a shared feeling or identification while empathy simply allows for the possibility of understanding to take place.</p> <p>In practice (researching an issue, taking a stance, refuting a counter argument, revisiting a stance after new information or discussion, collaboration, etc.) this is a fundamental practice of rhetoric.</p>	<p>The ability and willingness to consider and attempt understanding of another’s position, claims, situation, or perspective.</p> <p>Relies upon the ability to move situationally in thought and understanding/feeling.</p> <p>This does not necessitate agreement or allowance, but instead places the rhetor in a position of consideration and willingness to engage the other.</p>

### **Selected Virtues, Exclusion, and Grouping**

After reviewing the twenty-one virtues proposed to be goods internal to the practice of rhetoric and thus critical to an ethical framework for instruction, I now return to Annas’ (2011) and Herrick’s (1992) requirements identified at the beginning of this chapter. Specifically, each virtue must be evaluated against its potential to become habitualized through instruction and practice; be persistent, reliable, and characteristic; increase in skilled use; maintain the ability of conscious thought to guide and intervene; aid in the discovering of truths and arguments relevant to decision making on contingent issues; advocate, interpret, and propagate ideas before publics;

and defend propositions in debate. The arguments and definitions of each virtue in the tables above, as well as my own knowledge of instruction and application of these ideals in the classroom, will now be used to assess each virtue against the requirements (Appendix A). After, as some of the virtues suggested are somewhat overlapping in definition and/or function, or some may act as sub-virtues to others, they will be grouped similarly according to definition and function in practice.

Three proposed virtues were evaluated and found not to meet all six criteria: 1) temperance; 2) exemplars; and 3) *eudaimonia*. First, temperance as defined and evidenced does not aid in discovering truths and arguments relevant to decision making on contingent issues or defending propositions in debate as it is a virtue aimed inward and focused more on consumption and replication than cooperative acts such as dialogue or engagement. Second, exemplars as defined and argued for are, rather than practicable virtues, those actors who have already habitualized and elevated such virtues in their practices and can therefore be used as *models* for action and behavior and so do not meet any of the standards for use in a virtue-based instructional framework. Finally, *eudaimonia* is a holistic end to virtue, not a virtue itself, though an argument could be made for its inclusion simply on the basis of “keeping your eye on the prize.” If one were to prioritize and focus on *eudaimonia*, it might be considered a virtue by way of guiding the other virtues in their respective deliberative functions of rhetoric, but ultimately it will not be included due to its higher order meta-end nature. Similarly, while *phronesis*, as argued and defined, does meet the bar for inclusion, its integrative function of balancing and administering the other virtues implies that its threshold for existence and application relies upon the existence and application of other virtues *first*: it is a virtue of synthesis, per se. Since the goal of this thesis is to create a framework that provides the potential for rhetorical and

discursive *phronesis* through the combination and application of virtues inherent in the practices of rhetoric itself, it will also be excluded. This leaves truthfulness, good-faith, accountability, open-mindedness, intellectual generosity, intellectual courage, collaboration, intellectual humility, nuance, honesty, tolerance/principled intolerance, civility, cooperation, acumen, appropriateness, constructiveness, and empathy. In grouping the remaining virtues, I have considered their purpose, definition, and the generative nature of their practices to lead to other, similar virtues.

**Table 5: Virtue Grouping**

Virtues of Accessibility	Virtues of Introspection /Reflection	Virtues of Connection	Virtues of Responsibility	Virtues of Capacity or Skill
Truthfulness Good faith Honesty Open-mindedness	Intellectual generosity Intellectual courage Intellectual humility	Collaboration Cooperation Civility Empathy	Accountability Appropriateness Tolerance/principled intolerance	Nuance Acumen Constructiveness

Truthfulness, good-faith, honesty, and open-mindedness are all virtues focused around the necessity for and the ability to enter into and foster engagement in a manner that allows all parties to interact with the assumption of transparency. These virtues are critical to the accessibility of rhetoric; they allow for the possibility of an invitation to conversation and some level of trust in the process and thus have been grouped together as “virtues of accessibility.” Without truthfulness, a position of good faith, a commitment to honesty, or a willingness to be open-minded, that possibility and invitation to conversation becomes compromised.

Intellectual generosity, intellectual courage, and intellectual humility have been grouped together as “virtues of introspection/reflection” because these three are internally focused on the writer/rhetor themselves. Each of these virtues requires the willingness to acknowledge something about the actor and their position; the generosity to consider ideas and positions in

relation to one's own; the courage to examine one's stance and beliefs in various lights and contexts; and the ability to recognize fallibility in oneself and one's work.

“Virtues of connection” have been grouped together as collaboration, cooperation, civility, and empathy because all four enable dialogue and rhetoric that can build on the contributions of others or that require a position of consideration for other participants. These virtues all require connections to be made, sustained, and nurtured in support of ethical rhetorical practices.

Accountability, appropriateness, and tolerance/principled intolerance are categorized as “virtues of responsibility” because these are safeguards to the irresponsible engagement of rhetoric that can lead to toxic features and practices. Holding oneself accountable for the language, ideas, and audiences one engages with, judging the appropriate time and place to speak and when to stay silent or the appropriate measures and actions to take, and the discretion to tolerate or practice intolerance for positions that counter one's own all require a commitment on the part of the actor to engage in the practice responsibly and with a sense of awareness for the larger communities and discourses impacted by their actions.

Finally, I have deemed the remaining virtues—nuance, acumen, and constructiveness—“virtues of capacity or skill” and they are the most related to skill or habituation. Nuance is necessary for navigation of rhetoric in increasingly deft and discerning ways, as well as the ability to be precise and thoughtful in engagement. Acumen can be described as akin to shrewdness of evaluation and thought in response to not only situational elements of rhetoric and dialogue, but also the understanding of implications, exceptions, contingencies, and an ability to apply other skills appropriately and with discernment. Constructiveness has been included in this group because of its reliance on the other two virtues, nuance and acumen, to be applied.



Constructiveness does require intentional positioning of the actor in an open-minded, honest, and cooperative stance, but it also requires the actor to be skillful enough in their abilities to respond to dialogue or rhetoric in a manner that allows for continued engagement and understanding. Often, this takes a great level of dexterity and commitment on the part of the actor, and thus it relies heavily upon habituation and familiarity with not only rhetorical tactics and arguments, but also one's own technical abilities. All three of these virtues may be said to increase a rhetor's capacity for the art.

### **Virtue and the TEKS**

The question of why a new set of standards must be written in order to teach these virtues is a fair one. What is it about the current curriculum that would preclude the integration of these concepts? In order to answer this question, a comprehensive understanding of our current state standards is necessary.

The latest iteration of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) was adopted by the state in 2017 and featured a more streamlined framework than its predecessors. Notably, many of the individual standards from previous versions had been condensed into more holistically skill-based approaches to instruction and acquisition. The new secondary TEKS, in Chapter 110, subchapters B and C, of the Texas Administrative Code were intended to “embody the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking through the seven integrated strands of developing and sustaining foundational language skills; comprehension; response; multiple genres; author's purpose and craft; composition; and inquiry and research” and comprise the scope and sequence of skills a young adult is expected to learn and refine in their tenure as a Texas high school student (Texas Education Agency, n.d). Many of these skills are vertically aligned; that is to say,

the lower levels of skill requirements are implemented in the lower grades and are made more complex as the student rises in grade level to graduation and a presumed college-ready level.

For example, in the Multiple Genres strand, students are asked in sixth and seventh grade to “infer multiple themes in and across texts using text evidence.” Once a student moves to eighth grade, they are expected to be able to “analyze how themes are developed through the interaction of characters and events,” requiring a movement in skill from basic inference and selection of relevant supporting evidence to analysis produced by using the skills of inference, identification, and selection acquired in previous years. In ninth grade, that same student will need to be able to “analyze how themes are developed through characterization and plot in a variety of literary texts,” now adding an ability to take the skill from the previous year and apply it to multiple genres and texts. Finally, by a student’s tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade years, they should be able to “analyze how themes are developed through characterization and plot, including comparing similar themes in a variety of literary texts representing different cultures,” adding another layer of complexity to the skill set (Texas Education Agency, n.d). Through this process of compounding skill, it is evident that the TEKS, as written, are intended to produce “not only the increased technical mastery, but increased intelligence” that Annas has identified as the habituation of a skill (2011, p. 14).

What the TEKS do not provide, however well-structured they may be, is the space for a discourse-based instructional approach described by scholars such as Patricia Bizzell and James Porter that would facilitate ethical rhetorical instruction. Despite the inclusion of statements such as “[students] must have multiple opportunities to practice and apply the language of each discipline” that echo composition theories like WAC, or strands such as Foundational Language Skills that include skill targets such as “[participating] collaboratively, offering ideas or

judgments that are purposeful in moving the team toward goals, asking relevant and insightful questions, tolerating a range of positions and ambiguity in decision making, and evaluating the work of the group based on agreed-upon criteria” that would indicate an awareness of the importance of dialogue and ethical behavior in the exchange and refinement of ideas, there are several ideological and practical ways the TEKS fall short of being able to reliably produce students who can engage in ethical rhetorical practices (Texas Education Agency, n.d).

Firstly, even with a recognition of the importance of cross-curricular vocabulary and writing skills, the same concerns that Irwin Weiser (1992) highlighted with WAC apply here. When there is no attempt to engage the problems of context and interpretation that must be addressed alongside participation in various discourse communities, as is the case with the secondary ELAR TEKS, the understandings of value-based language and interaction are overlooked and the causal links between convention and belief are not addressed.

Secondly, despite a clear attempt to acknowledge and train students in the practices of responsible dialogue, collaboration, and research practices that address credibility and bias, the language of the TEKS is primarily centered in technical ability and fails to acknowledge the situational and contextual complications that would provide for the authentic practice of the goods internal to rhetoric that are critical to producing the habituated skills necessary for not only a community with the capacity to counter toxic rhetorics, but also of writers who practice “an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue” (Penguin Classics, p. 16). Simply put, the virtues of rhetoric are not sufficiently evident in the TEKS, and therefore they cannot be sufficiently habituated in order to become conventions of a discourse community that can “work to assert [its] will” against the toxic rhetorics and “effect change” (Porter, p. 44). This lack of focus on tenets and values inherent to rhetoric itself produces the potential for the instruction to

be, as Bizzell identifies, “an agent of the cultural hegemony” by oversimplifying and training students with technical skill but not the dispositions required for ethical rhetorical practices (p. 99).

My solution, then, would be to provide a framework for ethical rhetorical instruction that is value- (virtue-) based, that can be vertically aligned to promote increased skill and complexity, and that is grounded in realistic and functional discourse-based communities so as to encourage habituation of conventions and context by students. I suggest a framework that mimics the structure and language of the TEKS, but uses strands pulled from the goods internal to the practice of rhetoric that have been identified above. This framework would use the categorization and grouping in the previous section (see Table 5: Virtue Grouping) and articulate the various skill alignments and proficiencies in language similar to that of the individual TEKS.

Before that can be done, however, I will investigate in Chapter III whether or not virtue can be reliably acquired as both discrete and integrative skills, an idea commonly referred to as the skill analogy and one that has been discussed both historically by philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, as well as more contemporarily by scholars such as Julia Annas (2011), Jason Swartwood (2013), and Kristján Kristjánsson (2014). In Chapter III I will delve into the debate surrounding whether or not virtue, or more specifically wisdom, can be acquired using the skill analogy and how this may translate to the development and refinement of the virtues identified in this chapter.

### III. SKILLED WISDOM

In order to define virtue and tease out guidelines for the identification and selection of rhetorical virtues that might be used to build a framework for ethical rhetorical instruction with the end goal of *discursive* and *dialogic phronesis*, in Chapter II I reviewed theories developed by Julia Annas (2011) and James A. Herrick (1994). I found that virtues are, by definition and performance, dispositional in that they are persistent, reliable, characteristic, and allow for the development of increased skill; as such, the actor retains the capacity for conscious thought to guide their practice and application. They must also follow and propagate the inherent goods of the discipline as outlined by Herrick in that they aid in the discovery of truths and arguments relevant to decision making on contingent issues; they advocate, interpret, and propagate ideas before publics; and they defend propositions in debate (p. 144). The virtues that satisfy these components must also be practicable enough in and out of the classroom to form habituation.

Using these guidelines, I compiled a list of proposed rhetorical virtues from scholars and theorists and selected seventeen virtues<sup>6</sup> to include in an ethical instructional framework. These virtues were then grouped into categories by function and intent of the virtue. I closed with a discussion of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and demonstrated, using theorists Patricia Bizzell, Irwin Weiser, and James Porter, the TEKS' inability to engage students with the necessary ethical rhetorical practices that would prepare them to not only navigate toxic rhetorics, but also counter them.

In this chapter, I argue for the practice of rhetoric as a domain of complex choice that is challenging to perform, and thus demonstrate its similarity to practical, or real-world, wisdom;

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<sup>6</sup> Truthfulness, good-faith, honesty, open-mindedness, intellectual generosity, intellectual courage, intellectual humility, cooperation, empathy, civility, collaboration, accountability, appropriateness, tolerance/principled intolerance, nuance, acumen, and constructiveness.

investigate the potential for, through the practice of rhetorical virtues, practical wisdom to be reliably acquired using the expert skill model; address relevant objections to the idea of achievable *phronesis* through the skill analogy; and demonstrate the alignment of a virtue-based ethical rhetorical instructional framework with the expert skill model of developing practical wisdom (*phronesis*) in both theory and practice.

### **Practical Wisdom as Skill**

In his 2013 doctoral dissertation, *Cultivating Practical Wisdom*, Jason Swartwood attempts to ascertain if and how wisdom can be developed by examining the expert skill model, and more specifically, the Recognition Primed Decision (RPD) model and its ability and similarity to the acquisition of practical wisdom. In doing so, Swartwood defines wisdom in several ways. Practical, or real-world, wisdom, as opposed to theoretical wisdom, is, he says (echoing Aristotle), a “deep understanding of how one ought to conduct oneself” (p. 1). When reviewing virtue ethicists, wisdom is described as “the intellectual virtue that enables a person to make good decisions about what virtue requires, even in cases in which individual virtues appear to conflict” and that it “perfects and completes virtues of character,” highlighting its use as a virtue of synthesis and integration (p. 2). Further along, Swartwood’s discussion of wisdom sidles up to John Duffy’s determination of virtue ethics as the best approach to combat and dismantle the replication of toxic rhetorics because virtue, as a “single complex sensitivity” (McDowell, 1979, p. 332) to recognize reasons for action is far more appropriate to the situational nature of wisdom, or rhetoric, than rigid rules and principles of conduct offered by deontology and oversimplifications risked by heuristics. From this, we see that wisdom, practical wisdom, or *phronesis*, is a deep understanding of how to conduct oneself and a complex

sensitivity to situations where it is required that one determine which virtues to enact even in cases in which virtues may conflict or action is unclear.

Swartwood then turns to what he calls “a practically useful account of what practical wisdom is and how we can develop it” (p. 7). In doing so, he reviews both classical and contemporary theories of the skill analogy. According to Plato, skill and virtue, or in this case, practical wisdom, are marked by “an articulate and comprehensive grasp of principles governing how to use all these other practical skills [and thus] virtue, like practical skill, is developed by reflectively improving upon the grasp of principles learned from virtuous people” (pp. 7-8). Julia Annas (2011) builds on this Platonic idea in *Intelligent Virtue* when she zeroes in on two elements that skill development and virtue application have in common: the need to learn and the drive to aspire. Annas makes clear that these elements are baseline necessities for the development of both skill and virtue, in that without one or the other, there would be no way for an individual to progress beyond either simple mimicry or blind attempts:

We need experience and practice, and we have to learn from someone who can teach us...[w]hat the learner needs to do is not only learn from the teacher or role model how to understand what she has to do and the way to do it, but to become able to acquire *for herself* the skill that the teacher has, rather than acquiring it as a matter of routine, something which results in becoming a clone-like impersonator. (p. 17)

According to Annas, this “for herself” is reliant upon the drive to aspire, coupled with the understanding of the reasoning behind why the teacher does things this way or that, which pushes the student to true acquisition of skill or development and application of virtue.

Aristotle, however, presents a somewhat more amorphous picture of skill acquisition. According to Swartwood, the Aristotelian explanation of skill acquisition, and similarly, wisdom, claims that questions

cannot be answered through the application of fixed principles but rather require an ability to perceive what is required in particular situations (NE 1104a1-4). This

ability to see what to do in particular situations is acquired by habituating oneself to respond appropriately. Just as practice and repetition enable a doctor to see how to cure an illness without necessarily inferring the appropriate treatment from an application of principles of health, through experience a virtuous person learns to see what she ought to do (p. 9).

Swartwood goes on to use the conclusions of Matthew Stichter (2007) to delineate between the two positions:

According to Stichter, Annas and Plato have an ‘intellectualist’ view of skills, according to which skills are deliberative, articulate, and developed by “grasping universal principles” (2007, p. 188). Aristotle, on the other hand, has an “empiricist” view of skills, according to which skills are primarily intuitive, inarticulate, and “gained by experience” (ibid) (Swartwood, p. 10).

Driven now to reconcile the clear disagreement between philosophical explanations and support for the skill analogy, Swartwood turns to more “recent and rigorous empirical studies and models” to address the question of intuitive versus deliberative wisdom in the context of skill acquisition (p. 12). In doing so, he introduces Naturalized Decision-Making research (NDM) performed in the 1980s, which led to the development of the RPD model. The model was generated through the study of “complex real-world decision-making tasks” and focused on experts in the fields of chess, firefighting, and military tactics. The aim of the study that generated the RPD model was “to discover how expert firefighters made decisions in challenging firefighting situations they had recently encountered” (p.12).

Ultimately, the results of this study were that “the experts were often able to see, intuitively, what to do next...but they also used conscious deliberation...to make decisions,” thereby bridging the theoretical gap between Plato and Aristotle via functional, relevant, and recent psychological research (p. 12). Additionally, as suggested by additional studies on expert decision making, Swartwood addresses the caveat that “some so-called experts’ intuition is no more reliable than non-experts” and clarifies that “intuitive expertise can only be developed in areas in which there are humanly identifiable regularities governing good decisions and people



can get clear and relative immediate feedback in practice on the quality of their decisions (Kahneman and Klein 2009, 522)” (Swartwood, p. 13).

Swartwood’s investigation into the nature of wisdom and its relevant comparison to the skill analogy leaves us with several conclusions: 1) wisdom is a deep understanding of how to conduct oneself and a complex sensitivity to situations in which one must determine which virtues to enact, even in cases where virtues may conflict or action is unclear; 2) expert decision making and wisdom are defined by not only *intuitive ability* but conscious *deliberative ability*, while retaining the capacity to determine when to use intuition or deliberation (*meta-cognitive ability*); and that 3) expert level intuition can only be developed in situations in which there are identifiable regularities (i.e., conventions or standards) that govern good decisions and in which one can get clear and relatively immediate feedback on the quality of their decisions.

Swartwood continues his exploration of acquiring wisdom and clarifies that he is drawing a distinction between *perfect wisdom*, “manifested by the person who always conducts herself as excellently as possible,” and *real-world wisdom*, “the approximation of perfect wisdom that (at least some) real people have a hope of attaining” (p. 24). He goes on to elucidate that a *domain of complex choice* is “an area where the factors governing good decisions are many, varied and interact in complex ways, and a person needs to identify what to do with limited time and psychological resources”; a *domain of challenging performance* is “an area where successfully carrying out what is to be done requires sustained coordination of behavior, affect, and motivation in a way that does not come naturally to people and requires significant practice to achieve” (pp. 25-26). Wisdom, Swartwood argues, is exactly this: composed of nothing *but* complex choice and challenging performance. Place this understanding in conjunction with the conclusions above regarding the nature of wisdom, the necessary utilization of both intuition and

deliberative action, and the critical component of feedback on the quality of decisions based off identifiable regularities of action, and a more complete picture begins to form of the similarity between attaining expert skill in wisdom, virtues, and the practice of rhetoric itself.

Swartwood goes on to identify two additional elements critical to the skill analogy, expert skill development, and wisdom:

(a) an ability to identify (accurately, non-accidentally, and in a wide range of situations) in [the domain] what features in a situation require what response in order to achieve the goals of [the domain], and, when there are internal obstacles to carrying out that response, (b) an ability to identify how to overcome those obstacles (p. 29).

He terms this the *self-regulative ability*, or, in more condensed terms, the ability to not only see what needs to be done but do it regardless of any internal obstacles to action that may exist. For example, one might be able to recognize and understand that in order to achieve the goals of public discourse in the context of a debate, namely continued productive engagement and the refinement of ideas to arrive at the most reasonable, logical, or beneficial proposition about the topic at hand, one must display civility, cooperation, and intellectual generosity towards all parties involved in the debate. However, if actor A and actor B have deep personal and moral distastes for each other, a *self-regulative action* in order to overcome those internal obstacles of personal feeling is now critical to the action and accomplishment of the goals of the domain.

Additionally, Swartwood identifies *self-cultivation* as necessary for the skill and wisdom analogy—essentially, the ability on the part of the actor to determine how to make their practice more reliable and higher performing over time (pp. 28-36). These understandings and categorizations from Swartwood leave us with five performative and regulatory abilities necessary for the expert-level acquisition of skill, or practice of wisdom (virtue):

- *Intuitive ability*: an expert is often able to identify what she ought to do quickly, effortlessly, and without conscious deliberation.

- *Deliberative ability*: an expert is able to use slow, effortful, consciously accessible processes to figure out what she ought to do when an intuitive identification is lacking or inadequate.
- *Meta-cognitive ability*: an expert is able to identify when and how to rely on intuition and deliberation.
- *Self-regulative ability*: an expert is able to identify how to influence her environment, behavior, affect and motivations so that she can successfully do what she has identified she ought to do.
- *Self-cultivation ability*: an expert is able to identify how to tailor her practice and experience in order to make her intuitive, deliberative, and self-regulative abilities even more reliable over the long run. (p. 37)

## Rhetorical Wisdom

Swartwood's identification of the five abilities of expert-skill acquisition and performance in the domain of wisdom call for *intuition, deliberation, meta-cognition, self-regulation, and self-cultivation*. In the previous chapter, I organized the selected rhetorical virtues<sup>7</sup> proposed for an ethical instructional rhetorical framework into categories based on intent and performance. These virtues, when placed in the context of Swartwood's identification of necessary abilities and through their practice, hold the potential for the development of expert-skill acquisition in rhetorical virtue to be synonymous with the expert-skill acquisition and performance of wisdom.

By way of example, the virtue of open-mindedness is defined, in part, as "an attitude toward oneself as a believer rather than any particular belief. The willingness to acknowledge the possibility of error/wrongness" (Table 1). With the practice of this virtue, habituating it through circumstance and experience, the abilities of both *self-regulation* and *self-cultivation* are developed and reinforced. When practiced, appropriateness, or "the action of the rhetor to

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<sup>7</sup> Truthfulness, good-faith, honesty, open-mindedness, intellectual generosity, intellectual courage, intellectual humility, cooperation, empathy, civility, collaboration, accountability, appropriateness, tolerance/principled intolerance, nuance, acumen, and constructiveness.

evaluate contexts and situations of speaking/writing/engagement in order to determine a) the level of necessitation of their involvement; b) the times in which it is imperative to speak or let others' speak; and c) the approach to encourage or end further discourse as necessary" (Table 4), contributes to the development of *deliberation* and *self-regulation*. Practicing and refining the virtue of nuance requires "writing with precision, complexity, depth; shrewd deployment of style; attempting to complicate other writers' positions; deliberate challenge to broad generalizations, pat conclusions, flip dismissals, thin clichés" (Table 2). An actor must, through the practice of nuance, both in writing and assessing rhetoric, build their *self-cultivative* ability and their *intuitive* ability to see, using "precision, complexity, [and] depth," subtleties of argument and reason quickly and at a glance (Table 2). Finally, just as in the act of composition itself, a writer must use their *meta-cognitive* abilities to reflect on their own positions, beliefs, appeals, reasoning, words, arrangement, and style. In the practice of these suggested rhetorical virtues, one develops even further the *meta-cognitive* ability through the determination of when to use *intuitive* action or *deliberative* processes in responding to or creating new rhetorics. It is at this point, then, that the understanding of how a virtue-based ethical instructional framework for rhetoric can engender *discursive* and *dialogic phronesis* becomes clear. Through the instruction, practice, development, and habituation of the selected rhetorical virtues<sup>8</sup>, a student can arrive at the end of practical, real-world wisdom at the expert level: *intuitive*, *deliberative*, *meta-cognitive*, *regulative*, and *cultivated* rhetorical skill that serves as a community-based elemental change in the toxic rhetorical communities and landscapes of today.

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<sup>8</sup> Truthfulness, good-faith, honesty, open-mindedness, intellectual generosity, intellectual courage, intellectual humility, cooperation, empathy, civility, collaboration, accountability, appropriateness, tolerance/principled intolerance, nuance, acumen, and constructiveness.

## Enter the Naysayer

There are, of course, objections to the idea that *phronesis* may be reliably taught in an educational setting, and to those I now give consideration. Kristján Kristjánsson (2014) discusses both ideological and practical flaws in moral education theory in *Phronesis and Moral Education: Treading Beyond the Truisms*. In reviewing the arguments of contemporary moral educators who are drawing from Aristotelian moral theory, he highlights two elements as a base necessity for theories of moral education to address: habituation and *phronesis*. As he points out, however, these theories

rarely have much to say about the ultimate goal of cultivating fully fledged *phronesis*...the actual cultivation of *phronesis* is typically given short shrift [and] furthermore, they offer little in the way of nitty-gritty advice on how to design and conduct *phronesis* education, which could aid practitioners in the field (pp. 152-153).

After all, as Kristjánsson reminds us, Aristotle says in *Eudemian Ethics* that “it is not the knowledge of its essential nature that is most valuable *but the ascertainment of the sources that produce it* (Aristotle, 1981: 1216b19-20)” (p. 153).

As an objection to my work here, this assertion is relatively easy to counter: the entire aim of this thesis is designed to construct a workable, specific, virtue-based rhetorical educational framework from which those in the field of secondary education can draw guidance on how to teach and promote ethical rhetorics that engender *phronesis*. Using virtues internal to the practice of rhetoric itself, combined with both Swartwood’s argument for the application of the skill analogy and the RPD model of expert-skill acquisition to the attainment of wisdom, as well as his recommendations on strategies for developing wisdom (applied to the practice of rhetorical virtue), I will give the specifics Kristjánsson feels are lacking elsewhere in the relevant literature. Where this objection may have merit, however, is in the fact that this thesis is concerned primarily with the discipline-specific *discursive* and *dialogic phronesis*, as opposed to

the larger, more encompassing idea of *phronesis* in service of *eudaimonia*, or the well-lived life. As such is the scope of my work, that objection may stand as it is.

As for the element of habituation, Kristjánsson traces the philosophy and moral education communities' understanding and translation of it from exegetical to reconstructive, or "what Aristotle *should have said* about the moral developmental and educational processes" since Aristotle was frustratingly vague about them in his works (p. 157). Habituation as originally interpreted is the "intentional process of inculcation of character...in a repetitive pattern under outside guidance [and is] gradually superseded by a rational process whereby learners continue to be conditioned, but through a conditioning that is accompanied by description and explanation" (p. 156). Newer understandings and descriptions of the process, however, by scholars such as Nancy Sherman (1989), demonstrate the importance of critical reflection in habituation as the child is

gradually brought to more imaginative and critical discriminations and heightened sensitivities with the guidance of an outside instructor. The rehearsals required for acquiring the virtues "must involve the employment of critical capacities, such as attending to a goal, recognizing mistakes and learning from them, understanding instructions, following tips and cues." Thus, habituation constitutes a "critical practice": a gradual dynamic process of moral and intellectual sensitisation and integration (Sherman, 1989: 153-99). (Kristjánsson, p. 157)

This critical practice aligns with the purposes of pedagogy; that is, to bring the student from instruction, to guided practice, to independent mastery of identified and measurable skills. As such, habituation is addressed not only within the classroom itself but also as a core element of the philosophies that guide teachers' practices and will naturally not only be present but also be a core goal of the framework I provide.

Kristjánsson then moves into the meat of his objections to the functional ability of the skill analogy in order to develop *phronesis* in educational settings. The first objection is a minor and, evidently, technical one: the skill analogy attempts to engender *phronesis*, but according to

Aristotle, *techne* (skill) and *phronesis* lie in two different realms of performance and, as such, practical wisdom is not a *skill* to be acquired. However, Kristjánsson quickly categorizes this as a shallow objection, based primarily on the interpretations of other philosophers, and not on Aristotle's actual position, as, after all, Aristotle says in *The Nicomachean Ethics* that we acquire virtues "by first exercising them, just as happens in the arts," or skill-based disciplines (Penguin Classics, 2004, p. 32).

Moving on to an objection that "cuts deeper into the essence of the skill analogy," Kristjánsson introduces the differences in functionality of *phronesis* as *constitutive* and *integrative* (p. 162). *Constitutive phronesis* would be the action of wisdom in determining what action or result would be a virtue or virtuous in any given situation; meaning, for example, when a wise person must determine, taking into account all of the relevant elements of a situation, "what would count as justice in that situation," they are performing the *constitutive* function of *phronesis* (p. 162). However, as we know both from Aristotle and other philosophers since, *phronesis* is not just used to determine action one virtue at a time in isolation, and so also has an *integrative* function; that is to say, it is used to negotiate wise and good action when "two different virtues, for example justice and compassion, collide" (p. 162). Kristjánsson's main point in this objection is that the skill analogy, à la Annas and Swartwood, does not account for the *integrative* function of *phronesis* because the analogy focuses on "mastering the internal complexities of a particular skill" and "underplays the scope of the complexities involved in *phronesis* acquisition." Thus, the analogy does not satisfactorily address the idea of the well-lived life and adjudication between virtues that must stem from a fully functional development of *integrative phronesis*.

In focusing on expert-level skill acquisition in firefighters or chess players, Kristjánsson says, Swartwood misses the point of “the harmonious mastery of *one’s whole life*. For the skill analogy to work - and to be able to draw inferences from skill acquisition to full-virtue acquisition - it has to be shown that adequately learning a single skill also requires an all-round mastery of surrounding life tasks” (p. 163). Essentially, the objection lies in the fact that the skill analogy is too virtue specific and does not address the “existential, contemplative meaning making” that is required to address the fully integrative nature of practical wisdom in relative situations (p. 163).

In order to address this objection, a salient one, I turn to the nature of rhetoric itself and the groundwork I have laid previously relative to the function and intent of the selected virtues<sup>9</sup> and their correlation to the *intuitive, deliberative, meta-cognitive, self-regulatory, and self-cultivation* abilities in Swartwood’s work. Rhetoric is, as an inherently community-based interpersonal practice, an art that not only requires the development of discrete virtues, such as accountability, but facilitates those “existential, contemplative meaning making” situations that require an actor to use their *meta-cognitive* and *self-regulatory* abilities in conjunction with empirical observations and experiences to navigate the best path forward between virtues (e.g. when to use principled intolerance or open-mindedness or the choice between direct confrontation and a more subtle adjudication using collaboration and empathy). These virtues and abilities, when developed, are more critically necessary for *phronesis* today than ever before given the proliferation of toxic rhetoric and its features (e.g. eliminationist speech, denial,

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<sup>9</sup> Truthfulness, good-faith, honesty, open-mindedness, intellectual generosity, intellectual courage, intellectual humility, cooperation, empathy, civility, collaboration, accountability, appropriateness, tolerance/principled intolerance, nuance, acumen, and constructiveness.



demonization, violence, and outrage discourses) that are antithetical to not only productive discourse but also to virtue itself.

Kristjánsson's thrust seems to be that the skill analogy as argued thus far does not address the conflictive situations necessary to force the issue, or development, of *integrative phronesis* and therefore cannot be considered seriously because they then lack a functionally crucial element of the meta-virtue and must be considered incomplete. My framework of virtue-based ethical rhetorical instruction using the skill-analogy and Swartwood's argument for expert-level skill development resolves this objection by placing the skill analogy in an appropriately complex domain that not only involves the development of discrete technical skill, but also requires *integrative* and *meta-cognitive* abilities in situational and "contemplative, meaning making" contexts as a result of its social, political, and interpersonal nature.

Kristjánsson's third objection deals with the order in which *phronesis* is developed in the skill analogy. He argues that it is "putting the explanatory order upside down to try to learn...about general *phronesis* education from education in complex professional skills rather than vice versa, as the former seem to come before the latter - morally, psychologically, and logically - in the developmental order" (p. 164). Kristjánsson argues that, philosophically and practically speaking, it does not make sense to be able to acquire domain-specific *phronesis* (as suggested by Swartwood) before an actor has a grasp on and ability to perform general *phronesis*, so the attempt to reverse engineer a map for learning and acquiring practical wisdom from single skill-based professions that would be considered *techne* (like firefighting or chess) is putting the cart before the horse, so to speak. He does, however, acknowledge that Aristotle claims that *phronesis* is "concerned with particulars as well as universals, and how particulars become known from experience," and as such, there is some overlap between the acquisition of

individual skill and the extrapolation of general *phronesis* from that (p. 164). What Kristjánsson truly aims at with this objection, though, is the idea that in order to develop *phronesis* in accordance with

its role as excellence in deliberating about what ‘promotes living well in general,’ we need a general blueprint of the good life that can be conveyed through teaching a consciously accessible, comprehensive and systematic - if also flexible and open-textured - conception of what makes a human life go well (p. 165).

Kristjánsson is referring, of course, to *eudaimonia*, or the good life. The term “blueprint” may be a slight misnomer, however, as he acknowledges that a rigid, universal, rule-based theory (i.e. deontology or heuristic) is not conducive to the true situational and context based nature of wisdom development and “*phronesis* requires access to a systematic understanding of the good life that can *indirectly* inform and enlighten...development and decisions” (p. 165).

What brings this position into conflict with Swartwood’s work, however, is a disagreement on the necessity and value of the blueprint in the first place. Swartwood argues that an understanding of ‘good life’ principles can be drawn by experts using their meta-cognitive and deliberative abilities and reflecting on situations, while Kristjánsson counters that claim with the point that “a moral decision on how to act with regard to the human good can be immeasurably more complex than any on-the-job-decision of a skilled expert in a specific field” that any of Swartwood’s firefighters or chess players would encounter (p. 166). Kristjánsson ends his review of objections by concluding that “we need to keep an eye on the universals (taught via the blueprint), the particulars (perceived with both the help of habituation and knowledge of the universals), and how those come together in deliberation about courses of action” (p. 167).

Kristjánsson is correct, I believe, in his identification of a weak spot in the argument that truly applicable wide-ranging practical wisdom can be obtained from the practices of domain

specific skills as offered in Swartwood's theories. Some sort of blueprint, or perhaps a set of conventions or standards, is necessary in conjunction *with* the skill analogy to fully address and promote the development of *phronesis*. This blueprint in this case must be the principles of rhetorical virtue and the enactment of them to achieve *dialogic* and *discursive phronesis*.

The principles and goals of the virtues selected<sup>10</sup> for this work (the universals) have wide-ranging implications when paired with the conclusions from Swartwood's work on expert-level skill regarding the five necessary abilities; thus, we can begin to see how a framework of ethical virtue-based rhetorical instruction, enacted through complex situational practice (deliberation about courses of action), can promote practical wisdom not only in rhetorical situations (the particulars), but in an actor's ability to function within the larger community as a whole.

Rhetorical instruction and rhetorical practice are the perfect instrument for this work because the development of domain specific *discursive* and *dialogic phronesis* can not only counter and dismantle the effects of the toxic rhetorics we have seen poison private and public spheres in recent decades, but also a more general *phronesis* can be practiced in other areas of life using the *intuitive, deliberative, meta-cognitive, self-regulatory, and self-cultivative* abilities developed in the application of rhetorical virtue. As Kristjánsson comments, "the skill analogy [alone] does not account fully for the range, complexity and at times agonising depth of the existential questions with which the budding *phronimos* may need to grapple from time to time" (p. 167). Rhetoric, however, does.

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#### IV. THE STANDARDS OF VIRTUE

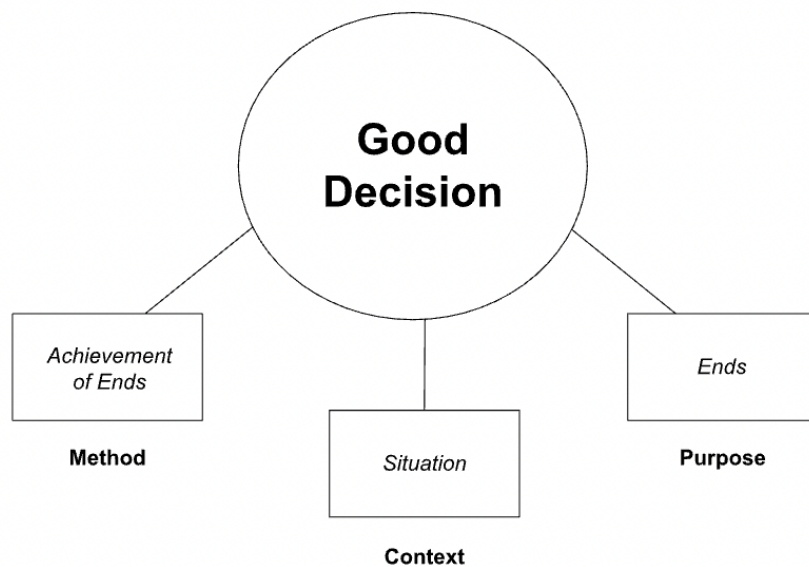
In the previous chapters I laid the philosophical and theoretical foundations for my proposed framework; the task now becomes to create it. In service of this, we must first return to Swartwood (2013) and his strategies for developing wisdom. In speaking about wisdom, and in pursuit of strategies to reliably develop it, he “[examines] the constraints on expertise acquisition” to identify strategies used to develop expert level skill in a particular domain and determines that the strategies used encourage the cultivation of a “sustained practice of guiding and reflecting on [one’s] decision-making” (p.53). As such, the strategies he provides for developing wisdom do not come in the form of flow-charts for decision making, or if-then evaluations, but rather “focus on teaching the strategies experts in complex domains use to *learn* how to make good decisions” (p.53). This alignment of purpose in strategy between expert level skill development, the development of wisdom, and the practices of pedagogy and critical thinking make the application of these types of strategies to a virtue-based rhetorical framework nearly seamless.

Swartwood’s arguments and theory regarding strategies for the development of skill in the domain of wisdom will thus serve as a basis for extension using pedagogical theory and classroom practice in the development and writing of standards, or say, a blueprint, for the practice in and acquisition of rhetorical virtue. The goal, as always, of this work is to provide a means to counter the toxic rhetorics of today via instruction in and habituation of the virtues of, or goods internal to, the practice of rhetoric.

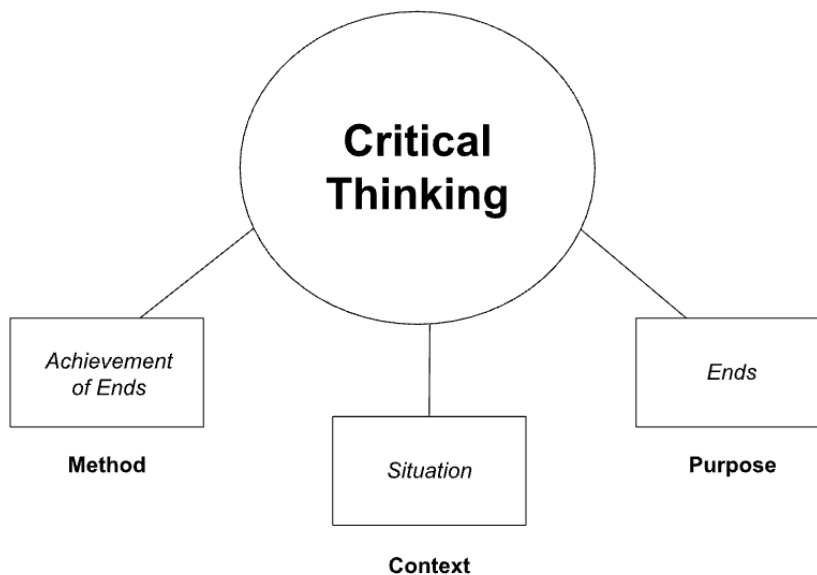
##### **Good Decisions**

Swartwood begins his discussion of strategies for developing wisdom by outlining exactly what a “good decision” is; namely, that it is “one that accurately tracks what really

matters and how it can be achieved” (p. 54). In this, there are other elements and complications present, of course. How does one identify, much less track, *what matters* in relative and shifting situational contexts? How can we select the best course of action to achieve an end amongst uncertainties of context and response? Questions such as these are not limited to decisions on wisdom but are central to the practice of rhetoric and communication itself, marking yet another alignment between the acquisition and performance of practical wisdom as a skill and the acquisition and performance of rhetorical virtues. Additionally, this orientation of good decisions at the center of the consideration web (so to speak) provides an easy overlay for a similar web with the critical thinking so necessary to learning at its center:



**Figure 1. Good Decision Making**



**Figure 2. Critical Thinking**

Naturally, potential impediments to both good decision-making and the critical thinking necessary for the enactment of rhetorical virtues exist. Firstly, as evidenced through millennia of collective human experience and as Swartwood points out, identifying *what* goal or purpose is the most important is difficult as, in nearly every situation, multiple goals may exist, some of which are more or less important depending on the context and immediacy of the situation at hand. Secondly, identifying a viable means of achieving the goal or purpose can be challenging for the same reasons. Lastly, overcoming “internal obstacles to doing what is required to achieve what matters” is an issue (p. 57); for example, a personal reluctance to involve oneself in an ongoing debate, or to reaching outside of one’s own comfort zone and routine in order to alleviate the pain or sadness of a partner in the moment, or the tempering of anger when speaking so that the dialogue remains productive rather than devolving into attacks. Ultimately, it is these considerations regarding the nature of good decisions and a combination of research on the development of expert level skill that leads Swartwood to his recommended strategies for the

development of wisdom, which are easily translatable to the strategies used for instruction by educators.

## **Strategies**

The first strategy Swartwood recommends is one of deliberate practice with feedback. Basing his argument on K.A. Ericsson's *Deliberate Practice and Acquisition of Expert Performance: An Overview* (2008), Swartwood identifies the strategy as "the motivated and effortful repetition of domain-related activities aimed at improved performance" (Swartwood, p. 58). However, motivated and effortful repetition alone are not sufficient to develop, over time, reliable expert level performance; there are both required components of deliberate practice that must be enacted, as well as the seeking out of challenges in order to avoid automaticity - a concept strikingly similar to the descriptions Annas (2011) provides in *Intelligent Virtue* regarding the necessity of retaining the capacity for conscious deliberation in conjunction with habituation.

The components Ericsson outlines are as follows: students of a particular domain must be 1) given a task with a well-defined goal; 2) motivated to improve; 3) provided with [relatively immediate] feedback; 4) provided with ample opportunities for repetition and gradual refinements of their performance (Ericsson, p. 991). This engagement with targeted, task-representative, domain specific, dynamic, and repeated practice serves to enhance one's ability to respond intuitively to the tasks of the domain, but in order to rise to the level of expert skill, students must also "purposefully counteract tendencies toward automaticity by actively setting new goals and higher performance standards" (Ericsson, p. 991).

Engaging in practice and seeking out increasingly challenging situations is not enough, however. Without "regularities governing good and bad decisions in that domain," say standards,

and sufficient feedback on their performance with regard to those regularities, performance cannot be measured or regulated to the degree of specificity necessary to improve (Swartwood, p. 60). Swartwood goes on to offer some situational examples of setting goals, identifying deficiencies in one's performance, etc., and offers suggestions as to how to practice improvement, like the use of analogical reasoning or "the ability to perceive and use relational similarity between two situations or events" (Gentner & Smith, 2012).

The next strategy is to seek out a variety of experiences that are representative of the tasks decision-makers need to perform in the domain in order to find the ones that challenge us (Swartwood, p. 65) This strategy not only allows for a learner to determine what their individual capabilities are in various contexts, but also how their decisions will affect other parties in relation to their choices and encourage reflection about this.

The third strategy Swartwood suggests is to "[cultivate] a habit of trying out new ways to achieve what matters" or attempt different methods to reach an end (p. 67). This, while encouraging flexible thinking, also correlates with the idea of intentionally increasing challenges in order to avoid automaticity and the fourth strategy of practicing attentional control (i.e. changing the aspects of a situation one focuses on to develop a "flexible awareness...that facilitates good decision making") (p. 67). Again, this method of shifting focus on the salient aspects of a situation in order to practice attentional control is, by necessity, recommended to be paired with critical reflection (strategy number five) in order to evaluate one's performance. Critical reflection "enables a person to develop and refine her 'mental models' of situations in order to enhance future performance [and] is a cognitive representation of a domain that aids in decision making (Klein 2009, 44)" (Swartwood, p. 69). An example of this might be to simply consider, as Swartwood suggests, based on work from psychologist Gary Klein, "what evidence



would it take to change your mind?” In doing this, learners are forced to make elements of their thinking explicit so they can be evaluated and tested against other evidence and to identify places where improvements or adjustments are necessary, or where discrepancies exist and must be resolved (pp. 70-71).

Swartwood’s final strategy is to seek out experts in the domain. While for him, addressing the acquisition of practical wisdom means seeking out the wise, for other domains the advice remains applicable in general: find those who have the skills one is seeking to develop. Coaching and feedback are critically important elements to the instruction and development of skills - one cannot learn by rote memorization or mimicry alone; we need guidance and adjustment provided by those who are further along the path than we. Ultimately, Swartwood says, the combination of these strategies promote an environment in which the learner will be able to learn to develop their skills the way experts learn to do. This method, focused on learning as opposed to providing theory or relying on heuristics, results in the development of the critical thinking, reflection, and experience-based trial and error necessary for skill refinement while promoting the avoidance of automaticity. It is thus keenly aligned with the best practices of classroom instruction.

### **Pulling into Pedagogy**

It is now that we are penultimate to the creation of the standards that will weave all these threads of theory, philosophy, and practice together, that we must consider what may have the most influence on their implementation: learning theory and classroom practice. Thus far, some of what has been argued is that:

1. There is an immediate need for an instructional framework in the field of Composition

Studies that is capable not only of navigating but also dismantling the toxic rhetorics and

rhetorical practices that have become so prevalent in our society and are responsible for much of the degradation of public and private interaction.

2. This work must take place in acknowledgement of complexities of language, interpretation, and context and go beyond such theories as WAC or the process or post-process approach in their engagement with and understanding of discourse communities.
3. Writers learn not only from their community, but a community learns from its writers; conventions and standards are multi-directional and capable of influencing each other simultaneously.
4. Therefore, in order to influence the conventions of toxic rhetoric in public and private spaces today, we must actively engage students with genuine discourse communities and writing with an eye toward the habituation of the virtues of rhetoric.

These conclusions, paired with Annas' skill analogy argument for the necessity of retaining the capacity for conscious deliberation alongside habituation and Swartwood's identification of the *intuitive, deliberative, meta-cognitive, self-regulatory, and self-cultivative* abilities required for the acquisition and development of expert level skill, highlight the importance of standards that are consistent with learning theories that value both an understanding of the intellectual and cognitive development of learners, as well as an awareness that learning will always take place in the context of the learner's language, community, and culture. Moreover, rhetorical virtues must be practiced in authentic environments, and as such, must take place in socially accessible contexts.

The work of developing these habits, the strategies Swartwood has outlined, and the social constructivist roots and understandings of language and interpretation match the work of the classroom nearly perfectly: the setting of goals, movement from guided instruction to

independent practice to increasing complexity of understanding, the presence of relative and immediate feedback, the deliberate questioning and reflection on practice, the interactive nature and collaboration with peers, and the presence of an expert make for an intertwining of theory and practice that carries with it the potential for fundamentally transformative change.

### **Considerations for Written Standards**

This potential for fundamentally transformative change, however, requires clear and clear-cut writing standards for instruction. Generally speaking, the standards should be written clearly enough to indicate specific or isolated skills and avoid the overlapping of performance; for example, a single standard should not encompass both a student's reading comprehension and their written style. The two, while interdependent in an essay response over close reading and analysis, are developed and measured independently, so a standard that addresses them simultaneously would only serve to make assessment and instruction more difficult in each of the isolated skills. At first glance, this would seem to prove difficult in the context of spiraling instruction, the practice of revisiting and reinforcing previously learned skills in addition to, or alongside, other or new skills. That, however, is not the case, as one activity (like the hypothetical essay assignment above) may touch on several skills at once, some previously mastered and some still in the developmental phases. This placing of a mastered skill alongside a developing one is common practice in the classroom to aid in students' acquisition of new material. The standards themselves, however, should remain separate, even if specific tasks may call for some combination of skill performance and overlap.

Additionally, the standards should be written in such a way as to encourage the development of a skill in multiple contexts; so, for example, rather than a standard that reads *students are able to identify elements of theme in poetry*, which limits the skill performance to

the genre of poetry, a more suitable standard would be *students are able to identify elements of theme in works of fiction, non-fiction, and literary non-fiction*, thus allowing for the use of various texts, genres, and the practice of the skill in context. While this may, at first, seem contradictory to the previous consideration, ultimately the phrasing of the second standard allows for measurement of the skill in each genre, while also indicating the goal of mastery over multiple genres. Lastly, standards also need to take into account what a learner is walking in the door with (i.e. what skills they have already mastered, what skills they have foundation for, but may need more practice with, and what skills have yet to be introduced).

More specifically, the standards that I am creating for instruction in rhetorical virtue must be written to focus on and encourage instructional activities and positionality that allows for the situational nature of rhetoric to be exercised and experienced by the student. This would indicate that, dissimilar to the TEKS, instead of including specific genres to be mastered, or providing standards specific to genres, like those concerned with meter, rhyme scheme, or organizational structure, my standards must allow and promote the selection of a much wider variety of materials that demonstrate rhetoric by teachers themselves. This may prove a delicate line to toe, as, by necessity, they need to be written to address the function and intent (call it the spirit of the law) of the rhetorical virtues specifically enough to promote habituation in those ideals through applied practice, while concurrently avoiding limitation or restriction of materials and instructional practice.

Additionally, when writing my standards, I must consider possible or likely impediments to the practice and development of the virtues in rhetoric and how to craft language that acknowledges those potential hurdles, while still focusing on and promoting or nurturing the skill itself. A final consideration is the advancement of skill, as mentioned previously in Chapter II.

While ultimately, I endeavor to write standards applicable for all levels of secondary instruction, the task for the moment is to simply find a beginning. What is written should be considered base level standards for instruction that may in the future be augmented with additional levels of complexity.

### **Writing the Standards**

As previously stated, the writing of the standards must take into consideration the intent and purpose of each of the selected virtues<sup>11</sup> in my framework. Without consideration of the fullness of each virtue, its intent, and its spirit, the standards would ring somewhat hollow and likely fall short of transmitting the necessary values of rhetoric to students. Therefore, we must first return to the tables that contain the virtues to use the arguments for them and the definitions constructed as those will serve as my guide. And finally, a note on the writing and phrasing of the standards: I have aimed at writing each standard from a position of and with language of capacity and action, not with language of deficiency. For example, rather than a standard highlighting the “do not” or what to avoid, it should focus on the “do” and what position, mindset, or specific measurable action a student should enact or display when fulfilling the standard.

### **Curricular Standards for Virtue-Based Rhetorical Instruction**

Below, I have adapted the original virtue tables containing the arguments of the authors for the virtue as a good internal to the practice of rhetoric as well as the definition. There is now a row to include my written standards so it is clear how the standards have been drawn from the

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<sup>11</sup> Truthfulness, good-faith, honesty, open-mindedness, intellectual generosity, intellectual courage, intellectual humility, cooperation, empathy, civility, collaboration, accountability, appropriateness, tolerance/principled intolerance, nuance, acumen, and constructiveness.

intention, purpose, and function of each virtue as well as to provide clarity and cohesiveness in line of reasoning for my readers.

**Table 6: Provocations of Virtue: Rhetoric, Ethics, and the Teaching of Writing (2019) with Written Standards**

<b>Claims</b>	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Truthfulness	Claims require trust on the part of the writer and reader: trust that the claim will be considered; trust that the claim is not deceptive or duplicitous. Relates to judgment, skepticism, questioning. In order to achieve this, the virtue of truthfulness (rhetorical honesty) must be enacted.	Aiming consistently to speak so as not to mislead others; opposite of mendacity, duplicity, distortion; avoidance of lies, dissembling, equivocation.  Not a virtue of absolutes - makes allowances for error, mistakes in judgment, etc.
Standards	Truthfulness - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek out and verify, to the best of their ability, that information used and claims made are correct and faithful to the meaning of the source</li> <li>• Consider and apply the appropriate or relevant context to claims made in both their speech and writing</li> <li>• Evaluate their work for potential misrepresentations of meaning and endeavor to correct for clarity and accuracy</li> </ul>	
Good Faith	Claims initiate the relationship between the reader and writer and as such are social actions that need to be made in good faith to enact dialogue and discourse; they are a calling out for connection; a particular way of making sense of things. So long as a claim can be judged to have been made and received in good faith, the possibility of dialogue exists.	The confidence of the reader and writer in making certain assumptions about each other; reader: claims are made without equivocation or deception; writer: readers will judiciously consider the ideas advanced in the claim
Standards	Good Faith - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate judiciously claims that are presented to them</li> <li>• Construct claims that honor the reader's capacity for cogent and reasonable engagement</li> <li>• Practice receiving and responding to claims from positions dissonant to their own in a manner that supports an intention of continued dialogue</li> <li>• Approach dialogue and discourse from a position that facilitates the finding of answers as opposed to the seeking out of conflict</li> </ul>	
<b>Evidence</b>	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Accountability	Presenting evidence in support of claims requires verification; examination of how beliefs and values support selection; what evidences may be accepted and supported in discourse communities; ethics of finding and using evidence (attribution); we teach the ethical commitments inherent to the action; community building	A presumption that someone can be called to answer, to stand before others for an examination and judgment upon his or her behavior

Standards	Accountability - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Practice selection of evidence that is verifiable and contextually appropriate or relevant to the claims made</li> <li>● Practice consistent careful and ethical attribution of evidence in both speech and writing</li> <li>● Equitably consider and evaluate evidence presented that is in opposition to personal beliefs, values, and experiences</li> </ul>	
<b>Counter Arguments</b>	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Open Mindedness	Compels the writer to deepen their knowledge of the issue by exploring it from multiple perspectives; strengthens <i>ethos</i> by demonstrating willingness to consider views that differ from their own; demonstrates the writer is imaginative, argues rather than holds opinions, considers rather than asserts, is strong enough to face uncertainty and complication; demands that writers represent views as their authors would represent them, listens to different points of view, respects arguments that diverge from their own, is willing to exchange ideas and revise their point of view.	The ability to listen carefully, the willingness to take what others say seriously, and, if called for, the resolve to adopt [others' positions] as one's own; a readiness to hear the other side, suspend one's own beliefs at least temporarily, refrain from making premature judgments  Resists narrow mindedness, prejudice, dogmatism. Demonstrates qualities of receptivity, tolerance, perhaps empathy.  An attitude toward oneself as a believer rather than any particular belief. Willing to acknowledge the possibility of error/wrongness.
Intellectual Generosity	Requires informed judgements about intellectual challenges to consider seriously, discrimination, judgment, fairness. Initiates reflection as to how ideas that contradict our own may help us better understand the truth of a given issue. Calls us to read in a spirit of confidence and goodwill.	A generosity of spirit and understanding, crucially involving sympathy and understanding; taking others' ideas seriously, avoid characterizing others in mocking or abusive language; how we think of the merit of another's work
Intellectual Courage		Engaging in conflicting views, read without bias or rancor, acknowledge the possibility of error/wrongness and the arguments of the other side  Willingness to address ideas or beliefs that may be uncomfortable, offensive, or antithetical to one's own
Standards	Open Mindedness - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Authentically engage with and review multiple perspectives that vary from one's own before coming to conclusions</li> <li>● Actively seek to understand the positions of others and listen to stakeholders</li> <li>● Evaluate their own position and arguments from the position of an opposing perspective for potential inconsistencies or error</li> </ul>	

	Intellectual Generosity - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate the use of language that respects and gives balanced consideration to those engaged in the conversation</li> <li>• Investigate and consider positions counter to one's own to discover or attempt to understand the truth or larger scope of an issue or context</li> <li>• Practice the objective evaluation of arguments that acknowledges their merit and relevancy to the conversation</li> </ul>	
	Intellectual Courage - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confront inconsistency or error in their own beliefs or positions with sincerity and willingness to adapt or adjust their understandings</li> <li>• Demonstrate forthright acknowledgment of uncertainty or ignorance of an issue or context when necessary</li> </ul>	
<b>Revision</b>	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Collaboration	Involves us in relationships with others; expected to speak candidly and critically; must listen as well as speak; speak in language that critiques but is free of personal criticism.  Requires engagement of others in discussion of deficiencies; calls upon us to confront inadequacies as writers; requires honesty and determination; includes humility, empathy, diplomacy	Engaging in relationships with others that are mutually respectful and honest; promotes reflection and diplomacy while building understanding
Standards	Collaboration - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice the use of candid and critical language in feedback that is free of personal criticism or attacks</li> <li>• Listen and give consideration to honest and constructive critiques of their work provided by others</li> <li>• Engage with others in a respectful and thoughtful manner</li> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to incorporate the commentary of others to reflect on, review, and revise their own work</li> </ul>	

**Table 7: Virtue Ethics (2018) with Written Standards**

<b>Considered Virtue</b>	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Intellectual Humility	Dialectic relies not on certain truths, but on "the wisdom of the perfect orator" who is thoughtfully engaged in deliberative processes that lead to informed decisions  Argument as a practice of radical humility - offering ideas up for scrutiny, criticism, rejection, ridicule  (Argumentation) Awareness of limitations allows pursuit of through knowledge that enables contribution to conversation,	An accurate or modest assessment of one's own intelligence, being receptive to the contributions and ideas of others, and being able to accept criticism of one's own ideas  Easily accepting or exposing one's own ignorance rather than denying or covering it up  Recognizing one's fallibility as a knower. The serious practice of the



	<p>establishing trusting relationships with others, and cultivate “deep confidence” that emerges from awareness of the value of engaging with a given network of ideas</p> <p>Rhetoric historically has a role in fostering the exploration of multiple possibilities, opening the path to considering diverse perspectives, and developing strategies for evaluating evidence and determining probability.</p> <p>Rhetoric encourages critical interrogation of civic discourse to prepare for productive engagement with complex issues; offers strategies for argumentation that include attentiveness, listening, mutual understanding.</p> <p>Meaningful discourse is grounded in respect, through consideration of others’ points of view and an awareness of the complex factors that shape all interactions through language and symbols</p>	<p>idea that you could be wrong.</p> <p>Ethical engagement with outside perspectives and respectful discourse/dialogue</p>
Standards	<p>Intellectual Humility - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Acknowledge limitations to their argument or positions openly and in a forthright manner</li> <li>● Seek out and engage with perspectives that have more experience in topics and conversations relevant to their work</li> <li>● Practice evaluation and examination of personal biases that stem from values and beliefs in context of opposing or divergent perspectives and their relevance to position</li> </ul>	
Nuance	<p>Critical examination of texts and argument engenders ability to identify “not A, not B, not C, but actually D” (insights more acute)</p> <p>Rhetoric calls for precise examination of language, order, context, difference</p> <p>The practice of writing and revision creates first identification and then ability to restate with more exactness</p> <p>Positioning in situations/context encourages rhetors to identify, determine, and define/explain “degrees of accuracy,” shades of meaning, precise truth.</p>	<p>Writing with precision, complexity, depth</p> <p>Shrewd deployment of style</p> <p>Attempting to complicate other writers’ positions</p> <p>Deliberate challenge to broad generalizations, pat conclusions, flip dismissals, thin clichés</p>
Standards	<p>Nuance - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Demonstrate the precise use of language to articulate, with increasing degrees of accuracy, their position and contextual groundings</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice comparing positions and statements in written, verbal, and multimodal texts in order to determine subtle and slight variations of meaning, context, and implication</li> <li>Produce appropriately complex arguments that avoid oversimplification and/or generalization</li> </ul>	
Honesty	<p><i>(informed by the context of social media/technological rhetorical spheres)</i></p> <p>Aristotle (classical rhetoric) was more focused on the habit-formation (habituation) that motivates the right action and, by extension, signals the existence of a disposition that will tell the truth to the right audience at the right moment across concrete and flexible rhetorical situations</p> <p>Rhetoric has a historic mandate to investigate the available means of persuasion for a given set of circumstances - social media has offered us a new way to evaluate this ability and practice relative to facts v honesty</p> <p>We must increasingly ask ourselves how social media and other technologies affect our ability to discern truth content, how and when to share it, and to whom.</p> <p>Allows us to look beyond the mere association of honesty with truth-telling and, instead to interrogate the dispositional forces - social and technological - in which the truth claim emerged</p>	<p>More than truth-telling or narrow appeals to information transparency</p> <p>A capacity and practice of practical reasoning that takes the form of a respect for truth's relationship to integrity and trust, particularly in ways appropriate to "techno social contexts"</p> <p>A flexible mode of discernment particular to the unique and concrete situations in which individuals find themselves</p> <p>The ability and the habit to see and reflect upon which situations call for honesty, knowing what truths should be communicated in a given situation, to whom one should communicate those truths in that situation</p>
Standards	<p>Honesty - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultivate an understanding of the relationship between truth and integrity</li> <li>Compare and contrast arguments and rhetorical pieces in a variety of contexts and mediums for evaluation of relative truths</li> <li>Practice the selection of evidence and claims relevant to the context and audience at hand without dissembling or prevarication</li> <li>Maintain fidelity to the accurate communication of what one understands to be true while allowing for the possibility of error and correction</li> </ul>	
Tolerance/Principled Intolerance	<p>Rhetoric/writing classrooms teach the necessary art of compromise, community, and peaceful co-existence that enable peoples of antithetical values to live side-by-side but also teach students when and how to reject tolerance in favor of principled intolerance</p> <p>Use of Socratic questioning/guided questions to explore ideas, examine problems, and challenge assumptions to</p>	<p>Tolerance: the social virtue and the political principle that allows for the peaceful coexistence of individuals and social groups who hold different views and practice different ways of life</p> <p>Tolerance: participants recognize the limits of knowledge and share a commitment to engage together in the process of questioning while</p>

	<p>arrive at the best understanding of the truth: emphasize the power of questioning ideas and negotiating contradictory thoughts</p> <p>Conversations require listening to perspectives we don't share, consider ideas found offensive, engage in dialogue; encourages a tolerant community - conflict is neither obscured nor denied, becomes a motive and provides incentive for dialogue, exchange, reflection, and new forms of understanding</p> <p>Writing groups foster both tolerance and intolerance: must listen to critique, opposing arguments, etc. However, when encountering arguments they find morally unacceptable (racism, misogynist, homophobic, argue against their existence) we do not ask that they tolerate these. We affirm in condemning and rejecting those discourses - we model the attitudes, habits, and dispositions of intolerance.</p>	<p>allowing one another to disagree.</p> <p>An end, not a means.</p> <p>Principled Intolerance: the rejection of tolerance and engagement with opposition in light of morally objectionable, intolerable, or condemnable, action or rhetoric</p>
Standards	<p>Tolerance/Principled Intolerance - In speech and writing, the student is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and identify elements of rhetorics that are morally objectionable, intolerable, or condemnable and highlight elements that are problematic or antithetical to the foundations of rhetorical engagement and dialogue</li> <li>• Demonstrate, in dialogue and collaboration, a commitment to engaging in the process of ethical questioning and disagreement with those who take positions contrary to their own</li> <li>• Evaluate examples of disengagement with harmful rhetorics</li> </ul>	
Civility	<p>Treating opposition civilly (with good faith, assuming intelligence of interlocutor) is more likely to keep discourse from disengaging</p> <p>Responsive to deliberate subversion and manipulation</p> <p>Confronts brute force with reason; distinguishes democracy from tyranny</p> <p>Prevents positions from becoming even further polarized</p> <p>Incivility doesn't prevent conversations/dialogue, it prevents constructive deliberation - participants</p>	<p>A set of behaviors, and particularly communicative ones, which convey a sense of good manners and respect for others. Suggested to be contextually specific.</p> <p>Tied to broad civic goals, offering standards of behavior that serve the ideals of public discourse</p> <p>A sincere disposition to live well with one's fellow citizens of a globally networked information society: to collectively and wisely deliberate about matters of local, national, and global policy and political action; to communicate,</p>

	retreat to their identities further	entertain, and defend our distinct conceptions of the good life; and to work cooperatively toward those goods of techno social life that we seek and expect to share with others  Goal is to safeguard the possibility of a common social life together
Standards	Civility - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge others' positions as legitimate entries into dialogue</li> <li>• Demonstrate a willingness to engage with those who question beliefs, values, and arguments</li> <li>• Maintain appropriate and meaningful language in their arguments and dialogue</li> <li>• Practice engaging in deliberation cooperatively</li> </ul>	

**Table 8: Rhetoric, Ethics, and Virtue (2018) with Written Standards**

Considered Virtue	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Acumen	The practices of invention, style, arrangement, etc. sharpen acumen (wit) via necessity and practice	<p>The sort of mental and verbal agility characteristic of skilled rhetors</p> <p>Inventional skill of coming up with arguments as well as rational capacities to track and evaluate arguments, identify evidence, and assess cases</p>
Standards	Acumen - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with and produce a variety of rhetorical styles and mediums</li> <li>• Practice translation of position and argument into reasonably complex summaries</li> <li>• Analyze and evaluate both isolated elements of argument and position as well as the success of the argument as a whole</li> <li>• Analyze and evaluate the efficacy of evidence used to support both their own and others' positions</li> </ul>	
Cooperation	<p>Rhetoric as persuasive and adversarial requires cooperation to achieve its goods.</p> <p>Simply the agreement to engage suggests two values are held: the value for the interactive reasoning process and the value for the rhetorical context or the context of a</p>	<p>Agreement to engage rather than resolve disagreement by some other means such as coercion or violence</p> <p>Respect for other rhetors as givers and hearers of reason and respect for contexts in which reason can be given and heard</p>

	<p>free exchange of arguments</p> <p>Rhetoric requires that regard be exhibited in the conduct of argumentation</p>	
Standards	<p>Cooperation - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate an understanding of and value for the interactive processes of dialogue through the rhetoric they craft</li> <li>• Work in a productive manner with both co-rhetors and those in opposition</li> <li>• Create arguments that are accessible to outsiders</li> </ul>	

**Table 9: An Experienced Teacher's Paradigm with Written Standards**

Considered Virtue	<i>Argument for Virtue as Internal Good</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Appropriateness	<p>The nature of discourse and engagement necessitates and habituates a sense of evaluation that the rhetor uses to determine the Ws: to whom should I speak, when is the right time, where should I aim my points, etc.</p> <p>The situational nature of rhetoric and the dynamic spheres in which we practice (and teach) it make this ability a foundational one. Not only when is it appropriate to speak, but when one must speak or when one must create space for someone else to speak or stay silent altogether.</p> <p>The questions posed by rhetoric and the communities crossed and touched create the space for the development of this virtue and make it invaluable to ethical rhetoric.</p>	<p>The action of the rhetor to evaluate contexts and situations of speaking/writing/engagement in order to determine</p> <p>a) the level of necessitation of their involvement; b) the times in which it is imperative to speak or let others speak; and, c) the approach to encourage or end further discourse as necessary</p>
Standards	<p>Appropriateness - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice judicious engagement in determining when to enter dialogue based on a variety of factors including topic, context, socio-cultural mores, and knowledge base</li> <li>• Maintain, in both language and tone, a demeanor that matches the tone of the relevant dialogue or engagement</li> <li>• Reflect on positionality in order to better evaluate appropriate times to enter or exit dialogue</li> </ul>	
Constructive	Voice does not exist in a vacuum -	An understanding of and action in

	<p>all rhetoric presupposes the existence of at least one other idea/position/interlocutor.</p> <p>Central to the nature of rhetoric, dialogue, dialectics, etc. is engagement. Addressing counter arguments, making claims, tailoring speech to audience and timing is all in support of continued engagement. A core virtue of rhetoric, then, is that it must be constructive in the sense that it builds - to continued dialogue, to the betterment of the community, to the solving of a problem, to the practice of the actor, etc.</p>	<p>accordance with the ideals of productive discourse, discovery of truths, and establishing/maintaining of relationships between parties (rhetors).</p> <p>The action of the participants to construct not only arguments in response to opposition or criticism, but to build a continuation of discourse and thought in a forward manner.</p> <p>This also encompasses the ability to recognize when constructive means the end of engagement of ideas that are not in good faith or are harmful to the ultimate goods of community, individual development, or contextual relevance.</p>
Standards	<p>Constructive - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solicit the responses of others</li> <li>• Address openly and fairly the critiques and counter arguments of divergent perspectives</li> <li>• Identify elements of audience and context necessary to engagement and tailor language and evidence to suit</li> <li>• Practice engagement from a position of problem solving</li> </ul>	
Empathy	<p>Again, rhetoric and dialogue are built on precepts of engagement and continuation/growth/movement towards “the good.” In order to accomplish this, by way of example, in argument - the writer/speaker must hear and evaluate the perspectives, claims, situations, and beliefs of others in order to determine a path forward or to evaluate their existing position. Sympathy assumes a shared feeling or identification while empathy simply allows for the possibility of understanding to take place.</p> <p>In practice (researching an issue, taking a stance, refuting a counter argument, revisiting a stance after new information or discussion, collaboration, etc.) this is a fundamental practice of rhetoric.</p>	<p>The ability and willingness to consider and attempt understanding of another’s position, claims, situation, or perspective.</p> <p>Relies upon the ability to move situationally in thought and understanding/feeling.</p> <p>This does not necessitate agreement or allowance, but instead places the rhetor in a position of consideration and willingness to engage the other.</p>
Standards	<p>Empathy - In both speech and writing, the student is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to evaluate a position from the perspective of another and apply context and situational</li> </ul>	

	differences to their understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice listening to divergent perspectives and asking questions intended enhance their familiarity with and understanding of another's position</li> </ul>
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## The Problem of Overlap and Grouping

With the standards now written, the problem of overlap and grouping becomes apparent. How to best organize the standards for instruction and a curricular framework that would be not only effective and manageable for secondary level classroom instruction but also allow for the integrated, or overlapping, nature of many of the virtues to support and enhance the others? Any grouping must also acknowledge and carry the potential to align with pedagogical theories and understandings of instructional techniques and supports.

The option exists to leave the standards grouped as they are, by virtue itself, and incorporate them as necessary into classwork and activity; however, that would ultimately prove difficult to synthesize with units or year-long instructional models and goals due to the somewhat abstract nature of the virtues themselves. For example, if I were to attempt to create and plan a unit of instruction around *truthfulness*, where do I begin? What sort of tasks would I be able to incorporate for my students? Do we focus only on those three standards, or should I incorporate more of the others? If I do that, where is my clear bridge to the next unit? Without some sort of theoretical overlay and guide with clear alignment with the purposes of rhetorical instruction, it would be more work to plan and would potentially result in an awkward fit.

With those considerations in mind, there are several potential grouping options using pedagogical theory to consider: the grouping from Chapter II (see Table 5), Bloom's taxonomy, and elements of the rhetorical situation. The original grouping in Chapter II (see Table 5) aligns the virtues by purpose, or function, and generative nature. It also takes into account the similarity

between many of these virtues. For example, those of *intellectual generosity*, *intellectual courage*, and *intellectual humility* are primarily internally focused on the attitudes and evaluations of self that the rhetor must perform in order to maintain the positionality necessary to engage in rhetoric without falling victim to the absolutes and lack of awareness and recognition that has been woven into rhetoric today as a result of features of toxicity (e.g. denial, eliminationism, demonization, and unaccountability) (Duffy, pp. 27-31).

This organization of virtues and their relative standards (Appendix C) has potential because it aligns the virtues in a way that addresses and delineates some of the purposes and elements of rhetoric and composition as argued in Chapter II. This particular grouping would allow for the organization of instruction for generative purposes; that is, the generation and construction of writing. Each element of the table—accessibility, introspection/reflection, connection, responsibility, and capacity or skill—relate to processes in composition. The standards present under responsibility, for example, cover practices related to evidence and position. The standards present under introspection/reflection cover practices related to revision and position. A skilled instructor might be able to implement this grouping of standards by focusing their planning and organization around particular writing tasks and incorporating each of these elements into the instruction and practice of those tasks as the grounding or guiding principles.

### **The Informed Argument**

I recommend, generally for any grade level as it is an extremely accessible text, Robert P. Yagelski and Robert K. Miller's *The Informed Argument* (2012) as a companion text for this particular grouping as they review various purposes (styles) of argument. An instructor could use their division (arguments to assert, arguments to prevail, arguments to inquire, and arguments to



negotiate and reconcile) and align that with the grouping of Table 5 in the instruction and performance of each of those purposes of argument. For instance, in an argument to inquire, students “use research and dialogue to try to discover the best of many possible answers to a question or problem” (p. 6); the student must demonstrate *open-mindedness* (accessibility), *intellectual generosity* (introspection/reflection), *collaboration* or *empathy* (connection), consider whether to use *tolerance* or *principled intolerance* (responsibility), and *nuance* (capacity or skill).

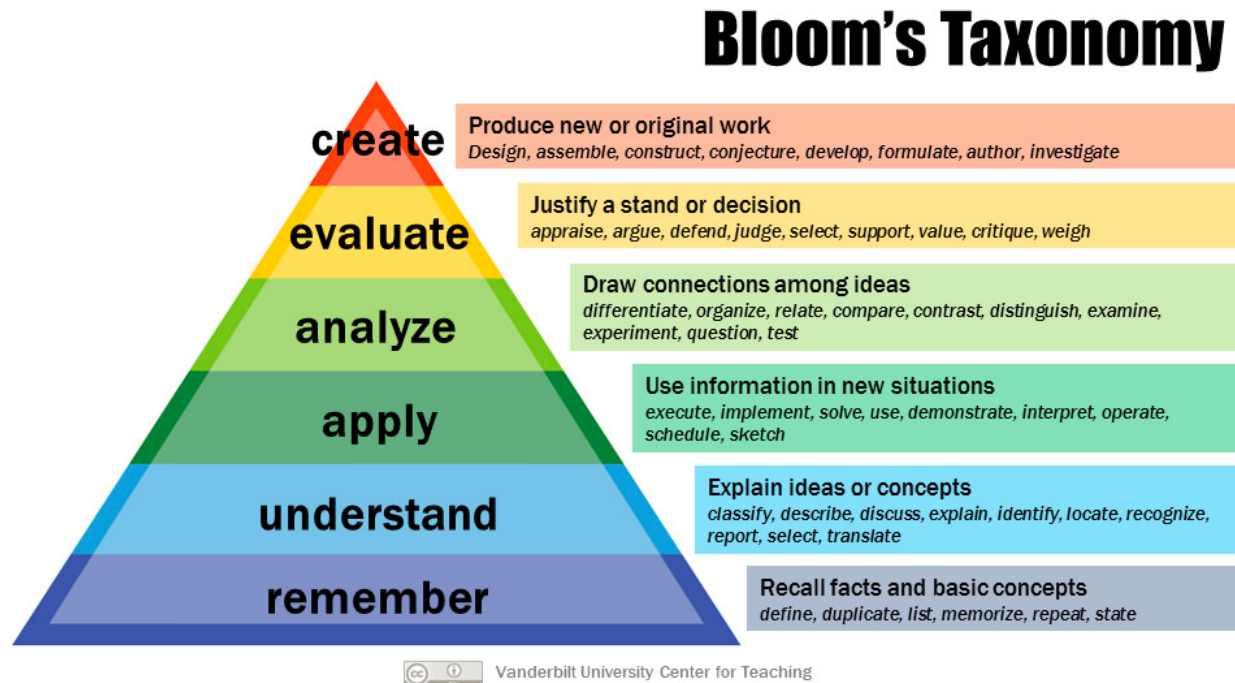
The instructor could also use the standards as they are grouped in Table 5 when teaching students how to evaluate and analyze rhetorics in various styles or mediums. When reviewing social media posts or advertisements, the students might be asked to determine how accessible the text is to outsiders using the truthfulness standard *evaluate their work for potential misrepresentations of meaning and endeavor to correct for clarity and accuracy*. After detecting the potential misrepresentations of meaning in the post or advertisement, students could evaluate the implications of those potential misrepresentations and correct it. A task such as this could also engage the standards of capacity or skill through the identification, analysis, and explanation of various types of nuance in advertising or public argument, or, through the *practice [of] comparing positions and statements in order to determine subtle and slight variations of meaning, context, and implication*.

This particular organization of standards could realistically align with the elements of pedagogy necessary for successful classroom instruction, enabling the instructor to create distinct units of instruction that address principles and practices of rhetoric. However, it is not without its challenges. Ultimately, this organization relies upon the similarity of purpose and function of the

virtues and could, potentially, complicate the processes of lesson planning and scaffolding that must be considered in a curricular framework.

## Bloom's Taxonomy

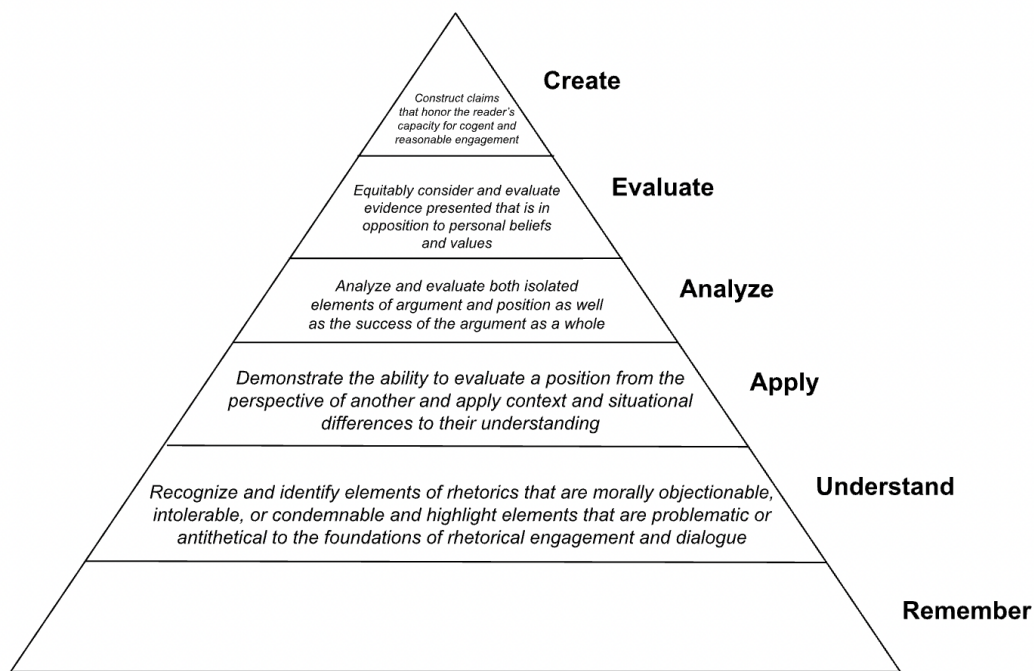
A second, but very different organizational option for the standards might be to mimic the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Bloom's is organized by verbs, or by level of action the student must demonstrate, and rises in complexity and performance from simple memorization, or remembering, to the much more complex synthesis and generative levels of evaluation and, ultimately, creation.



**Figure 3. Bloom's Taxonomy**

Any separation of the standards using this taxonomy would require evaluation not of the intent of the standard or virtue associated with it, but of the level of action the student would be performing in its practice. A potential benefit to this method of classification and ordering of the standards would be the 'leveling up' of skill, so to speak. Bloom's moves up in levels of

complexity, so any instructor using these standards and organizing them via this system could determine clear scaffolded movement from beginning level skill sets to the, ideally, fully integrated performance of these standards. Figure 4 shows a sample of where some standards might fall in this organizational scheme.



**Figure 4. Sample Standard Organization by Bloom's Taxonomy**

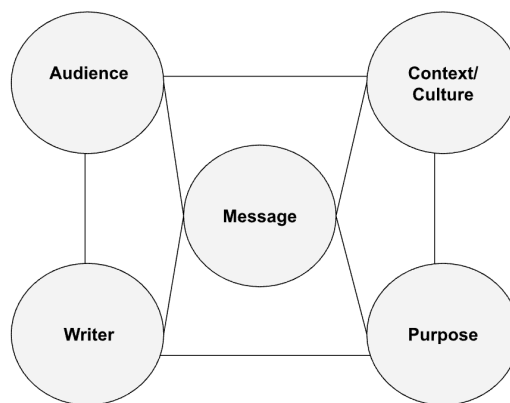
There are several things to address with this potential method of organization or classification of the virtue-based standards. First, as evidenced in the figure above, none of the standards in their current form demonstrate the lowest level of the taxonomy. This is not necessarily an issue in and of itself, however, as, generally speaking, for more effective and habituated instruction, teachers aim for the higher levels of the taxonomy that engage much more of the student's attention and skill than base memorization or definition. By the same token, though, this gap

cannot be ignored as the memory level of the pyramid serves as a foundation and reference for much of the upper-level work.

The second issue to address would be the current language of the standards. As written, they may not be immediately classifiable in Bloom's levels of practice; again, this is not necessarily problematic in and of itself, as most standards are not written to overlay perfectly with Bloom's, but it is notable when attempting to categorize them using this specific method. A revised version of the standards with Bloom's in mind specifically might resolve these issues by rephrasing with more targeted leveled verbs, or by adding some standards intended for the lower level of recognition, memory, or definition.

### **The Rhetorical Situation**

A third option is to organize the virtue-based standards by elements of the rhetorical situation: writer, purpose, audience, context/culture, and message. The most immediately apparent benefit to this organization would be its clear and aligned overlay with the purposes and instruction of rhetoric and composition; these are standards *intended* to be taught at a secondary level of instruction in a course focused on rhetoric and compositional practices, so why not use one of the most central features to that instruction as part of the framework itself?



**Figure 5. Elements of Rhetorical Situation**

This method also provides several potential gains for an instructional framework: firstly, it uses the language of rhetoric itself to organize the rhetorical virtue-based standards; secondly, it demonstrates clearly the interconnected nature of these elements, each influencing and feeding the creation of a message and indicating the effect the messages have on the other elements; and thirdly, it allows for the mixture and combination of the standards outside of their respective virtue classes to demonstrate in realistic combinations the way the virtues work together in different parts of the rhetorical process. Using an organization and categorization of standards like this (Appendix D) would likely provide an easily integrated framework for instructors.

In the following table, the standards have been organized into five categories: audience, writer, context/culture, purpose, and message. An important distinction between this table and the actual analysis and function of the rhetorical situation in instruction exists, however. The use of audience, writer, context/culture, purpose, and message for this framework serves primarily to narrow the attention or skill set to one particular area of rhetoric rather than as an analytical exercise.

For example, in the audience category, each standard has to do with engagement or attitude from those involved - that can mean as the intended audience or as providers of feedback or as those in opposition—essentially, anyone who hears the message or interacts with it. For the writer category, all the standards placed there focus on acts performed by the writer themselves, or skills and capacities that are necessary for the writer to develop. For the context/culture category, all the standards have to do with the positionality, context, or personal beliefs, values, and experiences that must be recognized and acknowledged by parties in order to move through dialogue. For the purpose category, the standards focus on skills and actions that aid in the general purpose (continued engagement, the seeking of solutions, community, finding answers,

etc.) of rhetoric and dialogue. Finally, in the message category, the combination of standards are specific to the clarity, transparency, and strength of messages that are created by the writer.

**Table 10: Standards Organized by Elements of Rhetorical Situation**

Audience	Writer	Context/Culture	Purpose	Message
Actively seek to understand the position of others and listen to stakeholders	Compare and contrast arguments and rhetorical pieces in a variety of contexts and mediums for evaluation of relative truths	Consider and apply the appropriate or relevant context to claims made in both their speech and writing	Approach dialogue and discourse from a position which facilitates the finding of answers as opposed to the seeking out of conflict	Evaluate their own position and arguments from the position of an opposing perspective for potential inconsistencies or error
Demonstrate the use of language that respects and gives balanced consideration to those engaged in the conversation	Seek out and engage with perspectives that have more experience in topics and conversations relative to their work	Investigate and consider positions counter to one's own to discover or attempt to understand the truth or fuller scope of an issue or context	Practice receiving and responding to claims from positions dissonant to their own in a manner that supports an intention of continued dialogue	Evaluate their work for potential misrepresentations of meaning and endeavor to correct for clarity and accuracy
Listen and give consideration to honest and constructive critiques of their work provided by others	Demonstrate the ability to incorporate the commentary of others to reflect on, review, and revise their own work	Demonstrate the ability to evaluate a position from the perspective of another and apply context and situational differences to their understanding	Work in a productive manner with both co-rhetors and those in opposition	Acknowledge limitations to their argument or position openly and in a forthright manner
Practice the use of candid and critical language in feedback that is free of personal criticism or attacks	Practice the objective evaluation of arguments that acknowledges their merit and relevancy to the conversation	Demonstrate forthright acknowledgment of uncertainty or ignorance of an issue or context when necessary	Demonstrate and understanding of and value for the interactive processes of dialogue through the rhetoric they craft	Practice selection of evidence that is verifiable and contextually appropriate or relevant to the claims made
Engage with others in a respectful and thoughtful manner	Evaluate judiciously claims that are presented to them	Reflect on positionality in order to better evaluate appropriate times to enter or exit dialogue	Demonstrate, in dialogue and collaboration, a commitment to engaging in the process of ethical questioning and disagreement with those who take positions contrary to their own	Practice consistent careful and ethical attribution of evidence in both speech and writing
Construct claims that honor the reader's capacity for cogent and reasonable engagement	Practice translation of position and argument into reasonably complex summaries	Maintain, in both language and tone, a demeanor that matches the tone of the relevant	Evaluate examples	Demonstrate the precise use of language to articulate with increasing degrees of accuracy their position and contextual
Create arguments that are accessible to outsiders	Engage with and produce a variety of rhetorical styles and mediums			
Address openly and fairly the critiques				

<p>and counter arguments of divergent perspectives</p> <p>Solicit the responses of others</p> <p>Practice engaging in deliberation cooperatively</p> <p>Acknowledge others' positions as legitimate entries into dialogue</p> <p>Demonstrate a willingness to engage with those who question beliefs, values, and arguments</p> <p>Identify elements of audience and context necessary to engagement and tailor language and evidence to suit</p>	<p>Practice comparing positions and statements in written, verbal, and multimodal texts in order to determine subtle and slight variations of meaning, context, and implication</p> <p>Maintain appropriate and meaningful language in their arguments and dialogue</p> <p>Confront inconsistency or error in their own beliefs or positions with sincerity and willingness to adapt or correct their understandings</p> <p>Authentically engage with and review multiple perspectives that vary from one's own before coming to conclusions</p>	<p>dialogue or engagement</p> <p>Practice judicious engagement in determining when to enter dialogue based on a variety of factors including topic, context, socio-cultural mores, and knowledge base</p> <p>Practice evaluation and examination of personal biases that stem from beliefs, values, or experiences in context of opposing or divergent perspectives and their relevance to position</p> <p>Equitably consider and evaluate evidence presented that is in opposition to personal beliefs, values, or experiences</p>	<p>of disengagement with harmful rhetorics</p> <p>Cultivate an understanding of the relationship between truth and integrity</p> <p>Practice engagement from a position of problem solving</p> <p>Practice listening to divergent perspectives and asking questions intended to enhance their familiarity with and understanding of another's position</p> <p>Recognize and identify elements of rhetorics that are morally objectionable, intolerable, or condemnable and highlight elements that are problematic or antithetical to the foundations of rhetorical engagement and dialogue</p>	<p>groundings</p> <p>Practice the selection of evidence and claims relevant to the context and audience at hand without dissembling or prevarication</p> <p>Seek out and verify, to the best of their ability, that information used and claims made are correct and faithful to the meaning of the source</p> <p>Maintain fidelity to the accurate communication of what one understand to be true while allowing for the possibility of error and correction</p> <p>Analyze and evaluate both isolated elements of argument and position as well as the success of the argument as a whole</p> <p>Analyze and evaluate the efficacy of evidence used to support both their own and others' positions</p> <p>Produce appropriately complex arguments that avoid oversimplification or generalization</p>
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This organization would also support one of the most important elements of classroom instruction: the spiraling of skills. In a traditional classroom, an instructor must think about how

to revisit skills necessary to the improvement of the student as a whole without isolating them from others. Classroom standards are designed to work together in different contexts, elements, and activities, so the selection of skills for each task can be purposeful and reiterative. Generally, a spiralized instructional model might look something like this:



**Figure 6. Spiraled Instruction**

The beginning of the year would be the left side of the spiral, and the end of the year would be the right side. Throughout the course of instruction, a teacher might ‘circle back’ and loop in previously visited skills (for illustration’s sake, imagine those skills are at the left side of each loop in the image) and revisit them in the course of learning more complex skills. This serves the purpose of not only increasing habituation of each skill through practice in different contexts and applications but also in reinforcing skills in increasing complexity and the timing (spacing) of their recall and use.

Ultimately, of the three potential frameworks discussed in this chapter, I believe the rhetorical situation framework to be the most promising for the organization of and instruction in the standards created. Its alignment with basic elements of rhetoric, as well as the distribution of the virtues across the categories, not only allows for but could potentially enhance the acquisition of the skills by reflecting the various combinations of virtues necessary to practice ethically focused rhetoric. Additionally, the framework’s alignment with spiraled instruction is pedagogically sound.



This is not to say that the framework or this particular arrangement of standards is without flaw, however. There might be other organizations that could be applied that demonstrate other ways of aligning with pedagogy and best practices. Revisions might be made, other voices consulted, and variations can be tested in classrooms for feedback. And as is the case with most theories, the scholarship and ideas of others may serve to improve it even further. What we must next address is the practicality of this framework in the current educational and instructional climate in Texas secondary education. More simply, can it work as things stand today?

## V. CONCLUSION

In order for students to habituate the skills and virtues of the standards, the classroom must, by definition, bring opposing perspectives together and provide them with a place to speak and be heard. To practice good faith or open-mindedness or honesty or collaboration, there must be divergence. I began this work with an overview of the situation rhetoric has been confronted with in recent years; the widening gyre of toxicity and devolution of dialogue in the public sphere that threatens and has taken hold of our discourse. Whatever this thesis says about toxic rhetoric, it says equally about the state of our public education system and the society that fuels it.

In Chapter I, I began with John Duffy's identification and classification of toxic rhetorics and discourse and argued for the necessity and responsibility of Composition Studies to address and counteract the problem from the position of virtue ethics. Then, after introducing the skill analogy, I centered my work around the idea that it is possible for rhetorical virtues, with the ultimate goal of *discursive* and *dialogic phronesis*, to be taught reliably in secondary level classrooms, but only when informed by the essential understandings of language and discourse; specifically the inherent nature of discourse communities to impact and change both the writer and the audience, an understanding gained from the social turn of the discipline.

In Chapter II, after reviewing theories developed by Julia Annas (2011) and James A. Herrick (1994), I found that virtues are measurable in the sense that, by definition and performance, virtues, or goods internal to the practice of rhetoric, must meet certain requirements of function in order to be considered such. The virtues that satisfy these requirements must also be reasonably practicable enough in and out of the classroom to develop habituation. After compiling a list of proposed rhetorical virtues from scholars and theorists, I selected seventeen

virtues<sup>12</sup> to evaluate against the requirements synthesized from Annas and Herrick. These virtues were then grouped into categories by function and intent into a new organizational structure. After a concise discussion of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), I argued, using theorists Patricia Bizzell, Irwin Weiser, and James Porter, that the TEKS demonstrate a marked inability to engage students with the necessary ethical rhetorical practices that would provide them the capacity to navigate and counter toxic rhetorics.

In Chapter III, after arguing for the practice of rhetoric as a domain of complex choice that is challenging to perform, and highlighting its similarity to practical, or real-world, wisdom, I considered the potential for practical wisdom to be reliably acquired using the expert skill model through the practice of rhetorical virtues. Ultimately, in addressing Kristjánsson's relevant objections to the acquisition of *phronesis* via the skill analogy, I demonstrated the alignment, and therefore merit, of a virtue-based ethical rhetorical instructional framework with the expert skill model of developing practical wisdom (*phronesis*) in both theory and practice.

In Chapter IV, I addressed the objective of this thesis and created the standards for ethical rhetorical instruction rooted in the virtues from Chapter II. Swartwood, in offering strategies used to develop expert level skill, made clear the end alignment of purpose in strategy between expert level skill development, the development of wisdom, and the practices of pedagogy and critical thinking. I then extended Swartwood's arguments and theory using pedagogy and tenets of classroom practice in order to develop my standards for classroom practice in and acquisition of rhetorical virtue.

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<sup>12</sup> Truthfulness, good-faith, honesty, open-mindedness, intellectual generosity, intellectual courage, intellectual humility, cooperation, empathy, civility, collaboration, accountability, appropriateness, tolerance/principled intolerance, nuance, acumen, and constructiveness.

The purpose of this work has been to provide a means to counter the toxic rhetorics of today via instruction in the virtues of our discipline. The final question is simply this: does the space we occupy today in public secondary education allow for that instruction to be effectively and successfully implemented? After nearly a decade teaching in Texas public high schools, navigating the endless bureaucracy, legislative grandstanding, and meddling of districts, state and federal politicians, parents, and the generally uninformed public, the short and deeply disheartening answer is no. Let's review why.

The first hurdle that comes to mind is the standardized testing environment. Texas has been using standardized testing to evaluate its students since 1979. English Language Arts (ELA) courses in Texas, and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards that are tied to them, are tested by the state starting in the third grade and continuing every year until tenth grade. The State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test assesses a student's mastery of the skills developed by the TEKS with a combination of multiple choice and short answer or extended response formats. These tests are then scored, multiple choice by machine and the written responses by human, and students are grouped into categories of proficiency from "Does Not Meet," to "Approaches," to "Meets," to "Masters." The "Approaches" level indicates a student is approaching grade-level appropriate performance in the content and is considered a passing score. In the state of Texas, a student must pass all five required EOCs (Algebra I, Biology, English I, English II, US History) in order to graduate.

Because these standardized tests are tied to graduation rates, overall school ratings, and intervention measures by the state, districts will usually implement some form of benchmark testing over the course of the school year in order to monitor students' progress towards mastery. A student's STAAR score has an impact on what courses they take and which interventions are

mandated and, thus, can affect the overall trajectory of their education. A school's rating is largely, though not entirely, determined by STAAR scores, and can have a massive impact on the surrounding area and the district as a whole. If the scores push them down into a lower rating, the district risks fewer families moving to the area, and thus their funding - since a portion of all Texas public school funding comes from property taxes - decreases. If a number of students do not graduate because they can't pass their EOCs or a campus is struggling to close the learning gap between special populations, the school's rating suffers. If a school that is high performing remains high performing but does not show adequate growth because there is no higher score to earn, their rating suffers. There are entire departments at educational publishing companies such as Pearson or Houghton Mifflin whose only job is to analyze released STAAR tests and develop practice and extension materials to sell to districts. For *forty-five years* the *entire* Texas public education ecosystem has been inextricably tied to standardized testing.

Now, ask yourself if you think any of the standards or virtues in previous chapters can be tested in a standardized environment that so easily divides students into categories and labels them with percentages. In what world could the principles, purposes, and practices of ethical rhetorical interaction be boiled down to multiple choice questions on a scantron? The notion of "standardized" is leagues away from the situational, context-rich, deliberative, reflective, communal nature of rhetoric.

Rhetoric, always a domain of complex choice and challenging performance, is especially so given the context of our recent political state and the increased aggression and polarization seen in the rhetoric there. At its heart, rhetoric is the art of communication and all that encompasses and yet, for each of the multitude of scholars and students of rhetoric, a variation of definition and thought exists when trying to distill it. Francis Bacon described it as "[applying]

reason to imagination for the better moving of the will,” Judith Butler as “concerned with the question of how communication works, how reality becomes presented in language..., and how we come to accept and transform our sense of reality through the means by which it is presented,” George Kennedy as “the energy inherent in communication: the emotional energy that impels the speaker to speak, the physical energy expended in the utterance, the energy level coded in the message, and the energy experienced by the recipient in decoding the message,” and Lloyd Bitzer as “a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action” (*American Rhetoric*, n.d.). For all of these descriptions, a thousand choices are implied: how to engage, how to reason, how to persuade, how to define, when to speak, when to be silent, when to provoke or suppress anger, whom to counter, what to portray, which reality, what language, and to what end. For every situation and context successfully and gracefully navigated to a successful end, the next will shift again; it is ever so because the root of the discipline and the art is in humanity itself, ever dynamic, ever in contention.

The clear option, in light of this understanding, then, would be to do away with standardized testing, right? But let’s pause for a moment and look at a recent example of how Texas’ educational system responded to just the briefest interruption to standardized testing resulting from complications of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. When comparing the last suite of STAAR assessments administered pre-pandemic, 2019, to the first suite of assessments administered post-pandemic, 2021, reading (ELA) scores had dropped by a collective 4% and math by a collective 15% (Oxner, 2021). State accountability ratings, while suspended for the 2021-2022 school year, meaning a school or district could retain their pre-pandemic rating until the 2022-2023 school year assessments had been returned, were now suddenly at risk. Schools,

like mine, increased exponentially their focus on the EOCs; whatever pressure we felt before, as teachers and as a community, had been ratcheted up to truly suffocating levels.

My point is this: instead of taking the interruption to testing as a time to examine the standardized system and the way it engages, or fails to engage, our students and promote progress, the system became that much more influential. With one year missing, the state was at an almost complete loss on how to function. Without STAAR, how could we tell if a student had made satisfactory progress? Without a percentage breakdown by TEK, how could we know where the student needed to focus? Without accountability ratings, how could districts argue for more funding or more staffing to address learning needs? The pandemic and post-pandemic phases of schooling would have been the most opportune time to reflect and inject much-needed change into the way the Texas public education machine operates, but it seems the state, after so many years living inside the dark and evenly shaded bubble of testing, no longer knows how to exist outside of it. In order to implement standards like those I offer in Chapter IV, and, more importantly, to do it right, Texas' educational paradigm would have to undergo several, frankly tectonic, shifts in both function and perspective that would take *years* to fully settle.

One of those shifts, and sadly another reason these standards cannot be successfully implemented in our current system, would be to return to teachers, the highly educated, purposeful professionals in the classroom, the trust and support of the public that is so critical to the success of the work we do. A recent scan of the news is all it takes to see that public opinion has more impact on classroom instruction now than I can ever remember. Take, for example, Texas' passing of Senate Bill 3 (SB3) in September of 2021: the "anti-critical race theory" legislation that grew from public outcry about discussions of racism, sexism, historical accounts of systemic oppression, and conflict in the classroom. Or, perhaps, take the example of Texas

State Representative Matt Krause, who, in October of 2021, sent a list of 850 books around the state “for districts to review” for appropriateness. This, inadvertently or otherwise, led to Governor Rick Abbot calling for bans on books that could be considered to contain “pornographic or obscene” material. Many of the books in question, and that were ultimately banned, dealt with topics like sexual identity (LGBTQ+) or race or were written by authors in those spheres (Getahun, 2022).

Supporters of legislative acts like these argue that the action is not about excluding voices but rather about being able to choose what children are exposed to, which could, independently, be understood as a reasonable concern. After all, there are some topics that, depending on grade level or age, students may just not be cognitively or developmentally ready to address. However, what is functionally being demonstrated through political and public rhetoric like this and its resulting action is that a) it is acceptable to silence *for others* the conversation around topics one does not agree with or wish to participate in; and b) there is little to no trust in teachers to address or guide conversation surrounding topics that inspire conflict or to know what their students are ready for. These realities severely undermine the principles of the standards (e.g., practice in empathy, evidence-based accountability, community, and productive dialogue) surrounding topics of contention, as well as the environment necessary to implement them.

Another shift required for these standards to be implemented successfully would be to extricate the act of composition from standardized tests. This option is potentially workable for two reasons: 1) let’s call a spade a spade here; the odds of dismantling the *entire* standardized testing system are slim at best, and 2) it is possible to understand, broadly, the original purpose and value of standardized testing; after all, the earliest intent was to ensure that students were all receiving an equivalent baseline of instruction and mastery in a set of skills. It was supposed to



be a way to encourage campuses and districts to serve each student and population equally. Its function in reality, however, has become something quite apart from the idealized version.

By uncoupling the composition element of standardized testing and returning its evaluation to the classroom and the hands of the teacher, we can attempt, through the use of my standards or standards like mine, to transform rhetorical and composition instruction and “radically restructure the way writing is offered,” à la David Smit (p. 12). We might be able to renegotiate the current practices of our discourse communities by using instruction in these standards to nurture students who, rather than *being* influenced by the toxicity, can *influence* contemporary discourse and introduce new conventions through their participation and conscious deliberation and engagement. A population whose “world views become more clearly a matter of conscious commitment, instead of unconscious conformity” (Bizzell, p. 100).

This is not to say that there is no way forward without substantial changes to the existing system. If we must work from within the machine, English III and English IV are two non-tested areas (except for the SAT) and could potentially be levels where the standards are applied. That solution, however, would also be somewhat of an uphill battle due to the current structure and progression of the TEKS. English III is referred to as American Lit. and English IV as British Lit., and both are focused, like the rest of the ELA TEKS, primarily on literature of various genres in those categories. The standards I’ve provided are intended, at this time, to be taught in a standalone course that brings focus to the practices of rhetoric and composition outside of the reading and comprehension or grammar and mechanics elements the TEKS develop. The possibility exists in which a campus or district could substitute these standards in a course; call it English: Rhetoric and Discourse (Eng. RD), for an English III or English IV credit, but the odds of that are realistically slim due to complicating factors reviewed previously.

Additionally, an enterprising teacher might integrate some of these standards into their courses as they stand. While not technically being instituted by the state, the teacher could use some of the individual understandings to supplement instruction and student objectives in their composition instruction and practice. Ultimately, the true test of my standards will be in the classroom. More work stands to be done on their integration into a workably cohesive day-to-day instructional paradigm. Lesson plans, activities, student materials, model texts, and assignments need to be written and implemented into a real-world classroom in order to tease out the reality of the framework and its purposes.

Rhetoric seeks to make sense and reason and community from our origins of disparity, and as such, is also, arguably, the most challenging art to practice. The desire to be right or win tempts us to take shortcuts, to demonize our opponent, to muddle truth, to inflame an audience so emotion overtakes reason, to leave our own positions unquestioned, to silence those who protest or oppose our action, to judge rhetorics stranger than our own, or to minimize the contributions of those younger, older, more disparate. The challenge lies, therefore, in the intersection of choice and performance, to say nothing of technical skill.

It follows, then, that we need “humanly identifiable regularities governing good decisions” available to us so that we might “get clear and relative immediate feedback in practice on the quality of [our] decisions” in order to develop a “deep understanding of how we are to conduct [ourselves]” (Swartwood, pp. 1-13). We need wisdom; practical, real-world, reasonably achievable, reliably habituated *wisdom* that is achievable through the ethical instruction and practice of rhetorical virtues.

## APPENDIX SECTION

### Appendix A - Evaluative Standards for Rhetorical Virtues

	Habituation	Persistent, Reliable, Characteristic	Skill with ability of conscious thought to intervene	Discovering truths and arguments relevant to decision making on contingent issues	Advocate, interpret and propagate ideas before publics,	Defend propositions in debate
Truthfulness	•	•	•	•	•	•
Good Faith	•	•	•	•	•	•
Accountability	•	•	•	•	•	•
Open- mindedness	•	•	•	•	•	•
Intellectual Generosity	•	•	•	•	•	•
Intellectual Courage	•	•	•	•	•	•
Collaboration	•	•	•	•	•	•
<i>Phronesis</i>	•	•	•	•	•	•
Intellectual Humility	•	•	•	•	•	•
Nuance	•	•	•	•	•	•
Honesty	•	•	•	•	•	•
Temperance	•	•	•	•	•	•
Tolerance/ Principled Intolerance	•	•	•	•	•	•
Civility	•	•	•	•	•	•
Exemplars	•	•	•	•	•	•
Eudaimonia	•	•	•	•	•	•

<b>Acumen</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Cooperation</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Appropriateness</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Constructive</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Empathy</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●

## Appendix B - Standards Grouped by Virtue

### *Truthfulness*

- Seek out and verify, to the best of their ability, that information used and claims made are correct and faithful to the meaning of the source
- Consider and apply the appropriate or relevant context to claims made in both their speech and writing
- Evaluate their work for potential misrepresentations of meaning and endeavor to correct for clarity and accuracy

### *Good Faith*

- Evaluate judiciously claims that are presented to them
- Construct claims that honor (match? acknowledge?) the reader's capacity for cogent and reasonable engagement
- Practice receiving and responding to claims from positions dissonant to their own in a manner that supports an intention of continued dialogue (engagement?)
- Approach dialogue and discourse from a position which facilitates the finding of answers as opposed to the seeking out of conflict

### *Accountability*

- Practice selection of evidence that is verifiable and contextually appropriate or relevant to the claims made
- Practice consistent careful and ethical attribution of evidence in both speech and writing
- Equitably consider and evaluate evidence presented that is in opposition to personal beliefs, values, and experiences

### *Open Mindedness*

- Authentically engage with and review multiple perspectives that vary from one's own before coming to conclusions
- Actively seek to understand the positions of others and listen to stakeholders
- Evaluate their own position and arguments from the position of an opposing perspective for potential inconsistencies or error

### *Intellectual Generosity*

- Demonstrate the use of language that respects and gives balanced consideration to those engaged in the conversation
- Investigate and consider positions counter to one's own to discover or attempt to understand the truth (scope?) of an issue or context
- Practice the objective evaluation of arguments that acknowledges their merit and relevancy to the conversation

### *Intellectual Courage*

- Confront inconsistency or error in their own beliefs or positions with sincerity and willingness to adapt or correct (adjust?) their understandings
- Demonstrate forthright acknowledgment of uncertainty or ignorance of an issue or context when necessary

### *Collaboration*

- Practice the use of candid and critical language in feedback that is free of personal criticism or attacks
- Listen and give consideration to honest and constructive critiques of their work provided by others
- Engage with others in a respectful and thoughtful manner
- Demonstrate the ability to incorporate the commentary of others to reflect on, review, and revise their own work

### *Intellectual Humility*

- Acknowledge limitations to their argument or positions openly and in a forthright manner
- Seek out and engage with perspectives that have more experience in topics and conversations relevant to their work
- Practice evaluation and examination of personal biases that stem from beliefs, values, or experiences in context of opposing or divergent perspectives and their relevance to position

### *Nuance*

- Demonstrate the precise use of language to articulate with increasing degrees of accuracy their position and contextual groundings
- Practice comparing positions and statements in written, verbal, and multimodal texts in order to determine subtle and slight variations of meaning, context, and implication
- Produce appropriately complex arguments that avoid oversimplification or generalization

### *Honesty*

- Cultivate an understanding of the relationship between truth and integrity
- Compare and contrast arguments and rhetorical pieces in a variety of contexts and mediums for evaluation of relative truths
- Practice the selection of evidence and claims relevant to the context and audience at hand without dissembling or prevarication
- Maintain fidelity to the accurate communication of what one understands to be true while allowing for the possibility of error and correction

### *Tolerance/Principled Intolerance*

- Recognize and identify elements of rhetorics that are morally objectionable, intolerable, or condemnable and highlight elements that are problematic or antithetical to the foundations of rhetorical engagement and dialogue
- Demonstrate, in dialogue and collaboration, a commitment to engaging in the process of ethical questioning and disagreement with those who take positions contrary to their own
- Evaluate examples of disengagement with harmful rhetorics

### *Civility*

- Acknowledge others' positions as legitimate entries into dialogue
- Demonstrate a willingness to engage with those who question beliefs, values, and arguments

- Maintain appropriate and meaningful language in their arguments and dialogue
- Practice engaging in deliberation cooperatively

#### *Acumen*

- Engage with and produce a variety of rhetorical styles and mediums
- Practice translation of position and argument into reasonably complex summaries
- Analyze and evaluate both isolated elements of argument and position as well as the success of the argument as a whole
- Analyze and evaluate the efficacy of evidence used to support both their own and others' positions

#### *Cooperation*

- Demonstrate an understanding of and value for the interactive processes of dialogue through the rhetoric they craft
- Work in a productive manner with both co-rhetors and those in opposition
- Create arguments that are accessible to outsiders

#### *Appropriateness*

- Practice judicious engagement in determining when to enter dialogue based on a variety of factors including topic, context, socio-cultural mores, and knowledge base
- Maintain, in both language and tone, a demeanor that matches the tone of the relevant dialogue or engagement
- Reflect on positionality in order to better evaluate appropriate times to enter or exit dialogue

#### *Constructive*

- Solicit the responses of others
- Address openly and fairly the critiques and counter arguments of divergent perspectives
- Identify elements of audience and context necessary to engagement and tailor language and evidence to suit
- Practice engagement from a position of problem solving

#### *Empathy*

- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate a position from the perspective of another and apply context and situational differences to their understanding
- Practice listening to divergent perspectives and asking questions intended enhance their familiarity with and understanding of another's position

## Appendix C - Table 5 Grouping

### *Virtues of Accessibility*

- Seek out and verify, to the best of their ability, that information used and claims made are correct and faithful to the meaning of the source
- Consider and apply the appropriate or relevant context to claims made in both their speech and writing
- Evaluate their work for potential misrepresentations of meaning and endeavor to correct for clarity and accuracy
- Evaluate judiciously claims that are presented to them
- Construct claims that honor the reader's capacity for cogent and reasonable engagement
- Practice receiving and responding to claims from positions dissonant to their own in a manner that supports an intention of continued dialogue
- Approach dialogue and discourse from a position which facilitates the finding of answers as opposed to the seeking out of conflict
- Authentically engage with and review multiple perspectives that vary from one's own before coming to conclusions
- Actively seek to understand the positions of others and listen to stakeholders
- Evaluate their own position and arguments from the position of an opposing perspective for potential inconsistencies or error
- Cultivate an understanding of the relationship between truth and integrity
- Compare and contrast arguments and rhetorical pieces in a variety of contexts and mediums for evaluation of relative truths
- Practice the selection of evidence and claims relevant to the context and audience at hand without dissembling or prevarication
- Maintain fidelity to the accurate communication of what one understands to be true while allowing for the possibility of error and correction

### *Virtues of Introspection/Reflection*

- Demonstrate the use of language that respects and gives balanced consideration to those engaged in the conversation
- Investigate and consider positions counter to one's own to discover or attempt to understand the truth or larger scope of an issue or context
- Practice the objective evaluation of arguments that acknowledges their merit and relevancy to the conversation
- Confront inconsistency or error in their own beliefs or positions with sincerity and willingness to adapt or correct their understandings
- Demonstrate forthright acknowledgment of uncertainty or ignorance of an issue or context when necessary
- Acknowledge limitations to their argument or positions openly and in a forthright manner
- Seek out and engage with perspectives that have more experience in topics and conversations relevant to their work
- Practice evaluation and examination of personal biases that stem from beliefs, values, or experiences in context of opposing or divergent perspectives and their relevance to position



### *Virtues of Connection*

- Practice the use of candid and critical language in feedback that is free of personal criticism or attacks
- Listen and give consideration to honest and constructive critiques of their work provided by others
- Engage with others in a respectful and thoughtful manner
- Demonstrate the ability to incorporate the commentary of others to reflect on, review, and revise their own work
- Demonstrate an understanding of and value for the interactive processes of dialogue through the rhetoric they craft
- Work in a productive manner with both co-rhetors and those in opposition
- Create arguments that are accessible to outsiders
- Acknowledge others' positions as legitimate entries into dialogue
- Demonstrate a willingness to engage with those who question beliefs, values, and arguments
- Maintain appropriate and meaningful language in their arguments and dialogue
- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate a position from the perspective of another and apply context and situational differences to their understanding
- Practice listening to divergent perspectives and asking questions intended enhance their familiarity with and understanding of another's position

### *Virtues of Responsibility*

- Practice judicious engagement in determining when to enter dialogue based on a variety of factors including topic, context, socio-cultural mores, and knowledge base
- Maintain, in both language and tone, a demeanor that matches the tone of the relevant dialogue or engagement
- Reflect on positionality in order to better evaluate appropriate times to enter or exit dialogue
- Recognize and identify elements of rhetorics that are morally objectionable, intolerable, or condemnable and highlight elements that are problematic or antithetical to the foundations of rhetorical engagement and dialogue
- Demonstrate, in dialogue and collaboration, a commitment to engaging in the process of ethical questioning and disagreement with those who take positions contrary to their own
- Evaluate examples of disengagement with harmful rhetorics
- Practice selection of evidence that is verifiable and contextually appropriate or relevant to the claims made
- Practice consistent careful and ethical attribution of evidence in both speech and writing
- Equitably consider and evaluate evidence presented that is in opposition to personal beliefs, values, and experiences

### *Virtues of Capacity or Skill*

- Demonstrate the precise use of language to articulate with increasing degrees of accuracy their position and contextual groundings
- Practice comparing positions and statements in written, verbal, and multimodal texts in order to determine subtle and slight variations of meaning, context, and implication

- Produce appropriately complex arguments that avoid oversimplification or generalization
- Engage with and produce a variety of rhetorical styles and mediums
- Practice translation of position and argument into reasonably complex summaries
- Analyze and evaluate both isolated elements of argument and position as well as the success of the argument as a whole
- Analyze and evaluate the efficacy of evidence used to support both their own and others' positions
- Solicit the responses of others
- Address openly and fairly the critiques and counter arguments of divergent perspectives
- Identify elements of audience and context necessary to engagement and tailor language and evidence to suit
- Practice engagement from a position of problem solving

## Appendix D - Grouping by Elements of Rhetorical Situation

### *Audience*

- Actively seek to understand the position of others and listen to stakeholders
- Demonstrate the use of language that respects and gives balanced consideration to those engaged in the conversation
- Listen and give consideration to honest and constructive critiques of their work provided by others
- Practice the use of candid and critical language in feedback that is free of personal criticism or attacks
- Engage with others in a respectful and thoughtful manner
- Construct claims that honor the reader's capacity for cogent and reasonable engagement
- Create arguments that are accessible to outsiders
- Address openly and fairly the critiques and counter arguments of divergent perspectives
- Solicit the responses of others
- Practice engaging in deliberation cooperatively
- Acknowledge others' positions as legitimate entries into dialogue
- Demonstrate a willingness to engage with those who question beliefs, values, and arguments
- Identify elements of audience and context necessary to engagement and tailor language and evidence to suit

### *Writer*

- Compare and contrast arguments and rhetorical pieces in a variety of contexts and mediums for evaluation of relative truths
- Seek out and engage with perspectives that have more experience in topics and conversations relative to their work
- Demonstrate the ability to incorporate the commentary of others to reflect on, review, and revise their own work
- Practice the objective evaluation of arguments that acknowledges their merit and relevancy to the conversation
- Evaluate judiciously claims that are presented to them
- Practice translation of position and argument into reasonably complex summaries
- Engage with and produce a variety of rhetorical styles and mediums
- Practice comparing positions and statements in written, verbal, and multimodal texts in order to determine subtle and slight variations of meaning, context, and implication
- Maintain appropriate and meaningful language in their arguments and dialogue
- Confront inconsistency or error in their own beliefs or positions with sincerity and willingness to adapt or correct their understandings
- Authentically engage with and review multiple perspectives that vary from one's own before coming to conclusions

### *Context/Culture*

- Consider and apply the appropriate or relevant context to claims made in both their speech and writing
- Investigate and consider positions counter to one's own to discover or attempt to

- understand the truth or fuller scope of an issue or context
- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate a position from the perspective of another and apply context and situational differences to their understanding
- Demonstrate forthright acknowledgment of uncertainty or ignorance of an issue or context when necessary
- Reflect on positionality in order to better evaluate appropriate times to enter or exit dialogue
- Maintain, in both language and tone, a demeanor that matches the tone of the relevant dialogue or engagement
- Practice judicious engagement in determining when to enter dialogue based on a variety of factors including topic, context, socio-cultural mores, and knowledge base
- Practice evaluation and examination of personal biases that stem from beliefs, values, or experiences in context of opposing or divergent perspectives and their relevance to position
- Equitably consider and evaluate evidence presented that is in opposition to personal beliefs, values, or experiences

#### *Purpose*

- Approach dialogue and discourse from a position which facilitates the finding of answers as opposed to the seeking out of conflict
- Practice receiving and responding to claims from positions dissonant to their own in a manner that supports an intention of continued dialogue
- Work in a productive manner with both co-rhetors and those in opposition
- Demonstrate and understanding of and value for the interactive processes of dialogue through the rhetoric they craft
- Demonstrate, in dialogue and collaboration, a commitment to engaging in the process of ethical questioning and disagreement with those who take positions contrary to their own
- Evaluate examples of disengagement with harmful rhetorics
- Cultivate an understanding of the relationship between truth and integrity
- Practice engagement from a position of problem solving
- Practice listening to divergent perspectives and asking questions intended to enhance their familiarity with and understanding of another's position
- Recognize and identify elements of rhetorics that are morally objectionable, intolerable, or condemnable and highlight elements that are problematic or antithetical to the foundations of rhetorical engagement and dialogue

#### *Message*

- Evaluate their own position and arguments from the position of an opposing perspective for potential inconsistencies or error
- Evaluate their work for potential misrepresentations of meaning and endeavor to correct for clarity and accuracy
- Acknowledge limitations to their argument or position openly and in a forthright manner
- Practice selection of evidence that is verifiable and contextually appropriate or relevant to the claims made
- Practice consistent careful and ethical attribution of evidence in both speech and writing
- Demonstrate the precise use of language to articulate with increasing degrees of accuracy

- their position and contextual groundings
- Practice the selection of evidence and claims relevant to the context and audience at hand without dissembling or prevarication
  - Seek out and verify, to the best of their ability, that information used and claims made are correct and faithful to the meaning of the source
  - Maintain fidelity to the accurate communication of what one understand to be true while allowing for the possibility of error and correction
  - Analyze and evaluate both isolated elements of argument and position as well as the success of the argument as a whole
  - Analyze and evaluate the efficacy of evidence used to support both their own and others' positions
  - Produce appropriately complex arguments that avoid oversimplification or generalization

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