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Writing a thesis is a hard work,- but it can be easy too

- We are all practitioners
- Speaking and writing
- The Rhetoric of a Thesis
- Myths about writing
- There must be an answer!

We are all practitioners

I question the well-established preconception of the dichotomy between theory and practice in planning. How do the so-called practitioners and persons in academia work? They read and write, they are listening and speaking. The products are written documents, maps and diagrams, and oral presentations to different and varied audiences. It is much the same.

Poiesis and Praxis

- In his *Nikomachian Ethic*, Aristotle operates with two forms of practice: *poiesis* and *praxis*.
- ***Poiesis*** is a form of practice and a productive activity, an activity that gives some sort of result, whether material or immaterial.
- ***Praxis*** is also a kind of practical activity. This activity is undertaken only for its own purpose. *Poiesis* is about making, *praxis* about doing.

Speaking and writing

If we examine the core of the activity, planning is primarily an oral phenomenon. Of course we both have and need planning acts, written studies and printed planning documents. But the crucial decisions take place through discussion, argument and voting. This is not so different from other public activities, such as political negotiations, baptism rituals, weddings and funerals. Courtroom proceedings are also mainly oral phenomena.

Context-dependent and context-independent language

From what I have already presented, we clearly understand how much more language is context-dependent in an orality-based community. Here we are at the very core of the difference between speaking and listening and writing and reading. This extreme context-dependence means that you have to choose your words, use the redundancy effect, create metaphors and confirm with metonyms to catch the attention of the audience. Every situation is a new and unique situation; every audience is a unique audience

Context-independent and context-dependent

Term

-context-independent

Concept

-context-dependent

Examples: justice, immigrants

Language and confidence

Language and confidence is a very crucial issue, which also has clear relevance to writing a thesis. What about confidence in relation to the spoken and written word? We often hear people saying, "it is so written", expressed in a way that means that it is true, even more clearly when referring to the Bible or the Koran. In our modern societies we trust our vision more than our hearing. In court, more weight is put on what has been seen than what has been heard. But this has not always been the case if we look some centuries back in time. Even Plato was highly critical of the confidence placed in the written text compared to the spoken argument.

The relation between the speaker and the listener

Who has the power, the one who speaks or the one who listens? The one who writes or the one who read?

This relation is very instructively and beautifully told in the parable of the sower in the Bible:

“A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it; and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and bore fruit a hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

(The Bible Luke 8: 5-8)

The Rhetoric of a Thesis

The new interest in rhetoric

Much of the new interest in rhetoric is based on the heritage of Aristotelian writings. Main elements in the Aristotelian rhetoric were **ethos, pathos and logos**. *Ethos* and *pathos* focus on the relationship between the addresser and the addressee. *Logos* focuses on the abstract content of argument. Formal logic and science concentrate on what is said, rhetoric is a balancing between what is said, by whom and to whom it is said. Without these three integrated dimensions, *ethos, logos and pathos* make no sense. This is also how the text of a thesis works.

Myths about writing

- The process of thinking and research comes before writing
- You have read all the relevant literature before you start writing
- The text should be strictly "objective"

Myths about writing

- You have to have the questions of research well defined before you start writing
- The final structure and disposition should be clear before you start writing
- All you write must be very creative and original

Two different "languages"

Language of Thinking

- Myself
- Try new thoughts
- Private language
- Unclear
- Spontaneously

Language of Presentation

For the reader/listener
Address an audience
Official language
Precise, esthethical
Well thought through

Critical, structured and clear

Good advices for writing

- Start writing,- and you will get ideas through the language
- Is there a difference between a lucky formulation and a good argument?
- Write down good ideas as soon as possible,- before they have "gone with the wind"

Good advice for writing

- Start writing about issues you like
- It is important to understand the difference between the first drafts and the final text
- Start working with the content, continue with structure and finish with good formulations

Good advice for writing

- Response from others during the writing process is important both to receive and to give
- Trust your own experiences, knowledge and feelings
- Writing has to do with training,- so just write!

How to finish the thesis on time

- Lock out from new impulses
- Use the material and the theories you have
- Do not be disturbed by ghosts of rationality!

There must be an answer

- In the conclusion there must be an understandable relation between the research question and the answer(s) to this question.
- And not just stop writing

How to finish the thesis on time

- The most important issue is to finish
- You are your own God in your own universe
- Think of the story you would like to tell. And just do it!

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