

Classic Rhetoric as a Model for Interdisciplinary Design/Engineering Instruction.

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Engineering, Technology and Design are three disciplines that work together in the world of product development along with the business related disciplines of Sales and Marketing. Power struggles have always existed over who is most important. These struggles exist because of a general lack of understanding between each of the disciplines about how they relate to one another in a larger picture.

As part of the curriculum in the College of Engineering and Technology at Brigham Young University, students participate in an interdisciplinary “Capstone” experience that is meant to expose them to the comparative peculiarities of the three disciplines of Manufacturing, Engineering, and Industrial Design. Despite the successes of individual team projects, a general dissatisfaction exists in the ranks of the students about what the actual benefit is for the collaborative effort.

This presentation will focus on how a study of classic rhetoric provides the unifying framework for bringing these disparate disciplines of Engineering, Design, and Business together. As a topic of study, the overarching themes of rhetoric (Audience, Decorum, and Kairos) help to frame the circumstances common to all three disciplines. Additionally, the classic “appeals” of rhetoric (Logos, Ethos, Pathos) serve to pinpoint the contributions of the three disciplines of Engineering, Business, and Design.

Rhetoric often gets the blame for superficially treating various subject matter (such as Advertising, Marketing, Styling, etc.); However, a thorough review of classic rhetoric gives a deeper perspective into the world of technology and the things we MAKE.