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OER Textbook Review for Public Speaking - (1) Exploring Public Speaking - (2) Stand Up Speak Out

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Medden, Stephanie Ph.D., 2024. OER Textbook Review for Public Speaking - (1) Exploring Public Speaking - (2) Stand Up Speak Out, *Open Educational Resources Publications*.

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**Exploring Public Speaking:
The Open Educational Resource College
Public Speaking Textbook
4th Edition**



**A Creative Commons Licensed
Open Educational Resource
for Introductory College Public Speaking Courses**

Resource: *Exploring Public Speaking: The OER College Public Speaking Textbook* by Barbara Tucker et al.

Reviewer: Stephanie Medden, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Bentley University

Date of Review: 08/31/2024

URL: [Exploring Public Speaking \(2019, 4th Edition\)](#)

Comprehensiveness

This textbook provides a comprehensive introductory survey of public speaking theory and practice from the perspective of communication scholars with a range of teaching and research expertise. It includes chapters on communication apprehension and anxiety, audience analysis, ethics, developing a topic, conducting research, organizing and outlining, supporting ideas, introductions and conclusions, usual visual aids, language and delivery. In addition, the final chapters cover conventional speech genres including informative, persuasive, and special occasion. The appendix includes useful information for students on speaking online and how to cite sources appropriately. Each chapter includes key concepts with their definitions, case examples, along with “everyday scenarios” that apply key concepts to common experiences. The chapters conclude with critical reflection questions that could be used to

encourage discussion in class or as the basis of individual reflections or a “pair/group and share” activity either in person or online.

Content Accuracy

The text material is accurate and aligns with many textbooks that provide students with an introduction to public speaking. The authors put effort into including diverse perspectives, examples, and images. Some of the images in the visual aids chapter feel dated in terms of the types of fonts, art, and design that might be expected of a contemporary visual presentation. Although outmoded, they are instructive and accurate with the basic ideas of contrast, white space, and balance being well addressed by the authors. Instructors using this text may want to supplement those visuals with more modern visual examples.

Relevance/Longevity

The text provides solid examples, scenarios, and topics without including any controversial, overly complex, or overtly outdated references. It may be seen as limited for some instructors in its lack of engagement with critical cultural theory and its relevance to public speaking. This is an introductory text that provides a basic survey of key concepts, theories, and applications for undergraduate students taking their first college-level course in public speaking. One limitation of the text in terms of relevant and trending content is the section on Online Speaking in the appendix. The authors allude to the fact that, as they revise and plan for the next edition, they know many instructors will require more digital modes of speaking and presenting. This version of the text provides only a few tips and links to other materials that instructors teaching multimodal communication courses with a required asynchronous component would most likely want to supplement.

Clarity

The language is clear and concise and should be easy to follow for undergraduate students taking their first public speaking course. Each chapter includes key concepts and their definitions which are highlighted in the margins on each page. Chapters begin with learning objectives and a chapter preview that primes students with information about what is expected in terms of learning comprehension and where they can find information in the chapter.

Consistency

The textbook maintains a consistent tone and style with similar formatting of objectives, content, concepts, lists, and questions in each chapter. Each chapter is mostly self-contained, focusing on that specific area and only occasionally referring to other chapter content when relevant. Some instructors may prefer more coherence or recurring themes between chapter content and examples throughout the text. However, for those who want to focus on one area at a time, this text works well keeping students focused on acquiring one skillset (e.g. supporting a speech with research) at a time without worrying about connecting too many concepts or ideas at once.

Organization/Structure/Flow

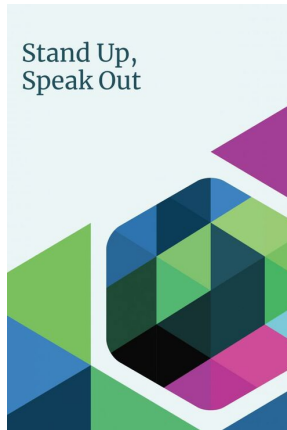
The text is organized clearly and consistently throughout the fifteen chapters making it accessible for students. Each chapter begins with learning objectives and a chapter preview as well as contains content organized with headings and lists where appropriate. Chapters include images with captions that enhance the content and provide some context for definitions and applications. Each chapter ends with a summary conclusion and list of reflection questions.

Interface

There are several ways to access the textbook's content, including Ebook (EPub, Kindle), PDF, and Microsoft Word versions. In addition, the textbook website includes accessible PDF and Word versions for download. The website also includes lecture slides for each chapter that can be downloaded as one zip folder with individual PowerPoint files for each chapter. This is a very convenient and helpful addition, as many open-source textbooks do not include such supplemental teaching content. The lecture slides appear to be for the 3rd edition of the text, so instructors may need to supplement some of the slide decks. The website also includes a zip file of sample outline formats. These outlines can be useful for students to structure and outline a variety of speeches and presentations.

Summary

Overall, this text provides a solid introduction to students seeking to enhance their public speaking skills. The website considers accessibility and includes some useful supplementary content for instructors. The text is somewhat limited in its engagement with multimodal communication, particularly digital modes of speaking, but could be easily supplemented by instructors wishing to include digital modes of speaking in their first-year basic communication course.



Resource: *Stand Up, Speak Out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking*

Reviewer: Stephanie Medden, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Bentley University

Date of Review: 08/31/2024

URL: [*Stand Up, Speak Out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking* \(original publication 2016, updated in 2023\)](#)

Comprehensiveness

This textbook provides a comprehensive introductory survey of public speaking theory and practice with an emphasis on the ethics of speaking and presenting ideas. It includes chapters on why communication matters, ethics, confidence, audience analysis, listening, conducting research, organizing and outlining, supporting ideas, crafting one's intro, body and conclusion, presentation aids, language, and delivery. In addition, the final chapters cover conventional speech genres including informative speaking, persuasive speaking, and speaking to entertain. The appendix includes useful information about speech preparation and practice. Each chapter is broken down into sections that begin with learning objectives and conclude with critical reflection questions or activities that ask students to engage with a central concept from that section of the chapter. Short and accessible case examples and scenarios are used to apply concepts to everyday situations.

Content Accuracy

The text material is accurate and aligns with many textbooks that provide students with an introduction to public speaking. All of the text contributors are scholars and instructors trained in communication studies. The use of visuals is limited, making the content feel text heavy and dense in some areas. However, the chapter sections are well organized, fairly short, and easy to follow.

Relevance/Longevity

The text provides solid examples, scenarios, and topics. I appreciate the emphasis on speaker ethics, which is a theme that recurs throughout the text. The language, theories, concepts, and applications are accurate and seem up to date and relevant to current events—avoiding overtly controversial or overly political examples while also asking students to engage with critical questions. This may be limiting for some instructors hoping to include more engagement with critical cultural studies, but it does provide a solid foundation which can be supplemented as needed.

Clarity

The text is straightforward, clearly written, and easy to follow. The authors use headings, subheadings, tables, and lists to organize content and make it accessible for students. One example is the chapter on confidence which provides a list of eight “myths about communication apprehension” (pp. 48-49). It takes students through commonly held beliefs about speaking anxiety and demonstrates how research often shows that many of the things we fear about public speaking are misunderstood.

Consistency

The textbook maintains a consistent tone and style with similar colors, fonts, and formatting of objectives, content, concepts, lists, and questions in each chapter. The consistent references to ethics stand out and are interwoven throughout the text.

Organization/Structure/Flow

The text is organized clearly and consistently throughout the eighteen chapters, making it accessible for students. Each chapter begins with learning objectives and ends with reflection questions, short exercises, and an end-of-chapter assessment that consists of short quiz-like questions with an answer key to test learning comprehension. The consistency and flow make the material easy to access and follow.

Interface

There are two ways to access the textbook's content: a web and PDF version. It is unclear if the PDF version has been created with accessibility in mind. There are some limited resources in the appendix, but outside of the text content, there are few supplemental teaching and learning materials which may prove limiting for instructors who prefer access to slides, worksheets, classroom activities, etc.

Summary

Overall, this is a good introductory text that emphasizes the importance of ethics in communication and covers the basic areas of public speaking. It does not delve into multimodal communication in-depth, nor does it provide specific instruction or tools for delivering digital presentations, so instructors teaching multimodal communication would need to provide some supplementary content there.

Stephanie Medden, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English and Media Studies at Bentley University. She teaches courses in communication and culture, including Multimodal Communication, Introduction to Communication Studies, Introduction to Mass Communication, and Intercultural Communication. Her research explores ethnocultural identity and the ways group culture is constructed and strategically mobilized to secure rights and recognition.