

Practically Speaking

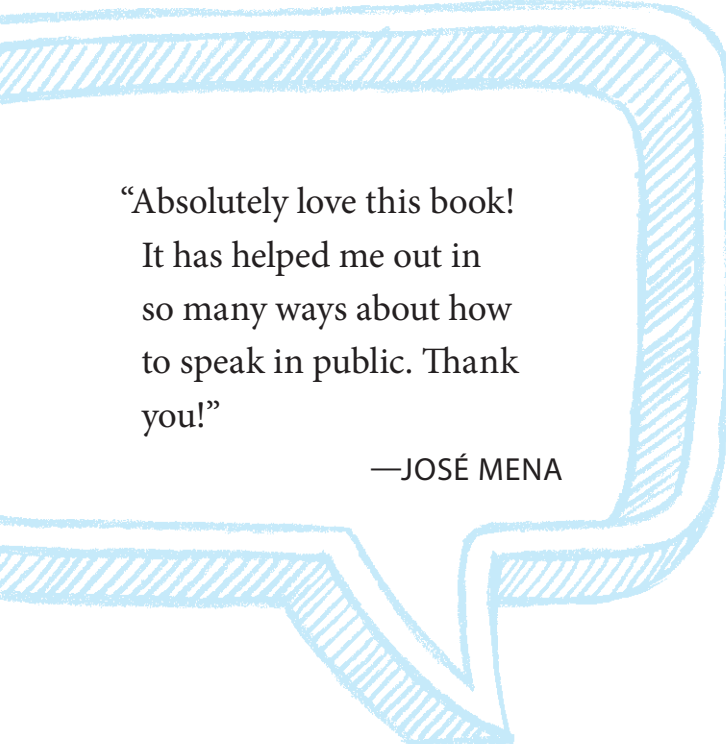
THIRD EDITION

J. Dan Rothwell



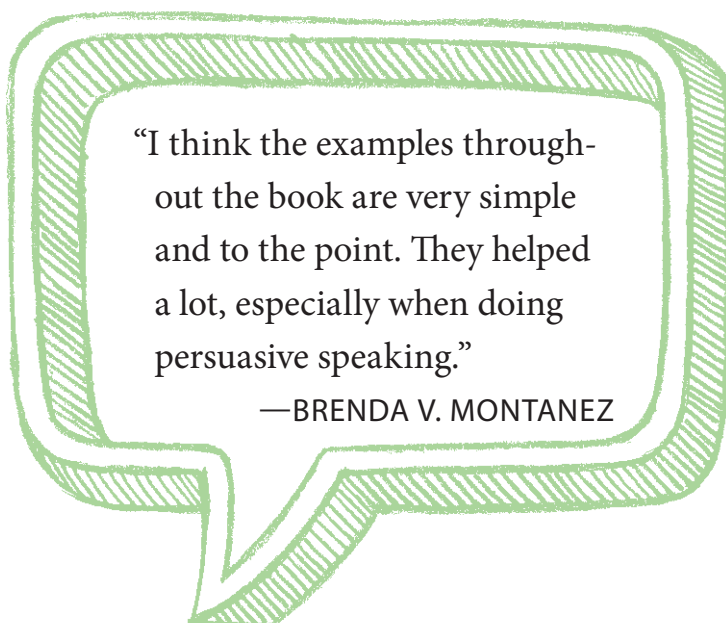
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Practically Speaking



“Absolutely love this book!
It has helped me out in
so many ways about how
to speak in public. Thank
you!”

—JOSÉ MENA



“I think the examples through-
out the book are very simple
and to the point. They helped
a lot, especially when doing
persuasive speaking.”

—BRENDA V. MONTANEZ

Practically Speaking

THIRD EDITION

J. DAN ROTHWELL

Professor Emeritus, Cabrillo College

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To my lovely wife, Marcy.
No better partner in life could be imagined!

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Preface

Public speaking texts continue to take two main approaches. One could be called the all-you-can-eat buffet approach. These works are resplendent with almost every conceivable tasty feature that only the most dedicated and motivated students will ever sample. They can be wonderful books as a kind of “everything you ever wanted to know about public speaking, and then some” reference work, but public speaking novices may see them as daunting. A second is the cookbook approach. These works primarily offer a list of recipe steps for constructing and presenting a speech. Striving to cover “only the basics,” they achieve this purpose, but few students are likely to find the recipe approach interesting reading.

Each approach has its merits and supporters. The significant success of the first two editions of *Practically Speaking*, however, suggests a clear desire by many to go in a different direction. *Practically Speaking* offers that different direction, one that was deemed worthy enough to receive the prestigious, peer-reviewed, 2018 **Textbook Excellence Award** from the Textbook and Academic Authors Association. Understanding this different approach can be ascertained by addressing key objectives for both students and teachers.

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

Practically Speaking aims to address four key objectives for students: (1) readability, (2) clarity, (3) applicability, and (4) affordability. Regarding the first objective—**readability**—the wisdom of Samuel Johnson seems apt: “What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure.” Maximum effort has been devoted to writing a textbook that might ignite the interest of student readers, not induce a coma. Textbooks are not meant to read like spy thrillers, but they need not read like an instruction manual for setting up your new flat-screen TV. Therefore, I attempted to practice what I teach about gaining and maintaining attention by using the attention-getting strategies discussed in Chapter 6. The text includes novel and humorous examples, stories, quotations, photos, and cartoons; intense, dramatic, and poignant illustrations; colorful and vivid language and metaphors; and startling statistics and historical facts sprinkled throughout every chapter. The writing style is conversational, and the perpendicular pronoun “I” is used when relating personal narratives. First-person singular is more engaging than

impersonal references such as “this author experienced” or “a student in the author’s class,” which makes me sound professorial and detached. Although it has been suggested that I employ the “editorial we” instead of the first-person singular, I tend to agree with Mark Twain, who said that “people with tapeworms have the right to use the editorial ‘we,’” but others should avoid it. I could use the passive voice instead, but that makes copy editors twitch and automatic grammar checkers become annoying nags. In addition, second-person pronoun references to “you” are employed frequently to address you, my readers, directly.

A second objective—**clarity**—is addressed in a variety of ways. The organization of each chapter follows the rules of good organizational logic presented in Chapter 8. Such logic can be examined by perusing the Table of Contents. In addition, headings and subheadings were carefully chosen and worded to produce maximum clarity as well as originality. Finally, numerous illustrations and explanations are provided to clarify all important public speaking concepts and processes.

A third objective—**applicability**—requires concerted effort to demonstrate the practical utility for students of becoming competent public speakers. The first chapter addresses in detail such applicability, opening with a discussion of the First Amendment guarantee of free speech, a subject of considerable currency. Numerous references to businesses and organizations, pop-culture references, and newsworthy events are used as illustrations throughout the text, reinforcing the applicability of competent public speaking for students.

A fourth objective—**affordability**—has become a national issue shared by students and faculty alike. An Oxford University Press national survey of 327 professors who teach public speaking at U.S. universities and community colleges revealed that almost 75% of respondents viewed price as an “extremely or very important” feature of a public speaking text. This view has only become more widespread in the ensuing years. Maximum effort has been exerted to make *Practically Speaking* an attractive but affordable alternative to other much more expensive choices. *Oxford University Press is a not-for-profit publishing company*, so this alone provides considerable price advantage for students surviving on tight budgets. The lean size of *Practically Speaking* also helps reduce the price.

OBJECTIVES FOR TEACHERS

Practically Speaking aims to address six different objectives for teachers of public speaking: (1) sound scholarship, (2) standard yet innovative coverage, (3) brevity, (4) recency, (5) logical organization, and (6) useful ancillaries. The first objective—**sound scholarship**—is critically important. Providing

substantial theory and research to bolster the advice offered to novice student speakers counters the oft-heard, naive claim that public speaking is just “common sense.” Without such theory and research, advice provided will appear as little more than the personal opinion of the author, easily trivialized or ignored, and often at odds with the opinions of others. It is bound to strike the more alert student readers that authors who insist on inclusion of research and evidence for student speeches, but include little research and evidence to support their advice offered in a textbook, seem contradictory. We never want students to equate relatively short texts such as *Practically Speaking* with being “lightweight” or insubstantial. The careful scholarship in *Practically Speaking* is evident in every chapter. *More than 500 references* are cited, and the communication competence model, carefully developed in Chapter 1, serves as the theoretical basis for all advice offered. In addition, *Chapter 12 on skepticism is the only chapter of its kind in public speaking texts that so thoroughly explains the theoretical underpinnings of the process of critical thinking for public speakers.* It is hard to imagine a more relevant discussion in the current polarized environment and troubling emergence of what a Rand report cleverly calls “truth decay” (Kavanagh & Rich, 2018).

A second objective for public speaking teachers—**standard yet innovative coverage**—is addressed in several ways. *All standard topics* found in any reputable public speaking text and identified in the Oxford survey previously referenced are thoroughly developed in *Practically Speaking*. Innovative coverage includes the opening *chapter on communication competence*. There is a *complete chapter on speech anxiety*, rarely offered in other public speaking texts. A full *chapter on gaining and maintaining attention*, a unique feature of *Practically Speaking*, emphasizes that speakers must do far more than merely gain the immediate attention of their audiences. The much greater challenge is to keep that attention throughout a lengthy speech. A full *chapter on skepticism (process of critical thinking)*, already mentioned, is yet another innovation of *Practically Speaking*. Finally, *two full chapters on persuasive speaking* provide both a theoretical explanation for how persuasion works generally and specific strategies for persuading public speaking audiences. Results from the Oxford survey showed that three-quarters of respondents believed that a chapter on foundations of persuasion is “extremely or very important.” A chapter on persuasive speaking strategies was similarly embraced by 85% of respondents.

A third objective—**brevery**—was identified by 72% of respondents to the Oxford survey as variously “important” to “extremely important.” A significant 85% of respondents in the same survey also noted that “preparing students to start speaking right away” is important. In standard, lengthy texts, students have to read hundreds of pages before they learn the basics for a simple first or second speech. Standard texts typically do not cover introductions and conclusions, for

example, until almost 200 pages of text have been read. Students will reach the chapter in *Practically Speaking* on introductions and conclusions in far fewer pages. *Practically Speaking* gets students “up and running” quickly. A sample “first speech” even appears in Chapter 2. Another related concern in the Oxford survey identified by almost half the respondents was that students do not read the text. Reading a textbook of 500 pages, or ones disguised as shorter but formatted in hugely over-sized pages, can be daunting. *Practically Speaking* is about half the size of most standard public speaking texts. Its brevity is far less intimidating, and thus it is more likely to be read.

A fourth objective—**recency**—is always a challenge because of the lag period between finishing a manuscript and completing the textbook production process that typically takes months. As someone with a bachelor’s degree in American history, I value the use of historical examples for illustrations. I also see the applicability of recent events to clarify concepts and processes in public speaking. I have included both, some examples as recent as 2019, the year this edition went into publication, and others that are centuries old. Great speakers and powerfully illustrative events do not appear in only one brief time period. We can learn from both the old and the new. This is true for references as well. Almost half of the more than 500 references are between 2014 and 2019, while some of the rest are more “classic” citations.

A fifth objective—**logical organization**—mirrors other public speaking texts. With the exception of Chapter 1 on communication competence, *all chapters can be moved to a different order if so desired*.

A final objective—**useful ancillaries**—is addressed in several ways:

- An **Instructor’s Manual**, which I have carefully revised myself, contains dozens of unique activities and exercises, as well as almost 150 website links to a wide variety of speeches and video resources.
- A **Test Bank** that provides a multitude of questions from which to choose for construction of exams.
- **PowerPoint lecture slides** have been updated.
- **Speak Up** prompts, where students can record themselves and show what they’ve learned using **GoReact**, a speech recording interactive software. GoReact’s easy-to-use video recording tool supports Communication courses by helping students practice and evaluate presentation skills in a fun and feedback-centered environment. Building confidence and skills, GoReact’s effective peer-preview features and instructor evaluation tools save time and provide necessary student support.
- An **Occasional Newsletter** that briefly discusses recent research and issues relevant to public speaking and keeps *Practically Speaking* updated is offered to any interested party.

- The **Ancillary Resource Center (ARC)** at www.oup.com/he/rothwell-ps3e provides students with chapter summaries, practice exams, key term flashcards, student web speeches, video exercises, and speech topic ideas.
- **Course cartridges** for a variety of Learning Management Systems, including Blackboard, Canvas, Moodle, and D2L, allow instructors to create their own course websites integrating student and instructor resources available on the Ancillary Resource Center and Companion Website. Contact your Oxford University Press representative for access or for more information about these supplements or customized options.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

Many important changes have been made for this third edition.

1. More than **200 new references** have been added, and dozens of old references have been deleted. An abundance of **new studies, surveys, and statistics** on a wide variety of topics has been included throughout the text. The **scholarship** has also been thoroughly updated.
2. The photo package has been greatly expanded to include **many new photos**. Some less interesting photos have been deleted. Photos have been carefully chosen to show more than a commonplace variety of individuals merely speaking at a podium.
3. Copious new **examples, stories, humorous anecdotes, and pop culture references** also appear throughout the text.
4. Dozens of recent excerpts from **student speeches** have been added.
5. **New subject matter** has been included, such as:
 - a. a lengthy discussion of **freedom of speech**;
 - b. a substantial section that discusses **online speaking**;
 - c. considerable new material on the “**death of expertise**” and the importance of credible sources;
 - d. substantial additional analysis of “**truth decay**”—the deterioration of critical thinking practices;
 - e. Appendix C on **group oral presentations**;
 - f. detailed steps on **how to become a skeptic** both as a speaker and listener;
 - g. new material on **gestures and cultural differences** in interpretation;
 - h. additions to the discussion of **selective attention**;
 - i. a segment on **startling audiences as speech openers**;
 - j. a section on language and **abstract words**;
 - k. an expanded and updated segment on **style in the electronic age**;

- l. new material on **eye contact**, **voice quality**, and **vocal fillers**;
- m. exploration of the difficulty students have **identifying biased sources**;
- n. extended discussion of **analogical reasoning**;
- o. development of **reframing** as a persuasion strategy;
- p. expanded coverage of **anger** as a persuasive strategy;
- q. more detail on **delivering a toast**.
6. Model informative and persuasive speeches, **Appendices A and B** have been completely **updated and significantly shortened**.
7. Some **material has been condensed** (e.g., humor as an attention strategy) and other material has been deleted (e.g., numerous political examples).
8. In aggregate, **more than 100 TED Talks and YouTube speech links** have been included at the end of chapters, many of them new additions, to provide valuable resources for students to see high-quality, and sometimes less than commendable, speeches for illustration and analysis.
9. **Critical thinking questions** have been added to the end of chapters.
10. **New chapter openings** have been provided for Chapters 1, 5, 7, and 8. Each opening provides a more engaging start to these chapters.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I am the former chair of the Communication Studies Department at Cabrillo College. I have a BA in American history from the University of Portland (Oregon), an MA in rhetoric and public address, and a PhD in communication theory and social influence, both from the University of Oregon. I have authored four other books in addition to *Practically Speaking*. They are *In Mixed Company: Communicating in Small Groups and Teams* (Oxford University Press), *In the Company of Others: An Introduction to Communication* (Oxford University Press), *Telling It Like It Isn't: Language Misuse and Malpractice* (Prentice Hall), and *Interpersonal Communication: Influences and Alternatives* (with James Costigan and published by Charles-Merrill).

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Communication Association “Community College Educator of the Year” award; a 2012 official “Excellence in Teaching” resolution by the California State Senate; and the 2014 Western States Communication Association “Master Teacher” award. Having never achieved one of my early life goals—to be a Hall of Fame major league baseball pitcher—these teaching awards, as much as I truly value them, will have to compensate for this one lifelong disappointment.

Practically Speaking



Communication Competence and Public Speaking

It was October 1, 1964, on the campus of University of California, Berkeley. A graduate student, Jack Weinberg, defied a campus ban on political information tables. Campus police confronted him at his table where he was promoting the Congress of Racial Equality. As officers attempted to remove Weinberg, hundreds of students spontaneously sat down in front of the patrol car, preventing it from leaving campus. Weinberg sat in the stationary police car for 32 hours. This single event spawned what became known as the Free Speech Movement. Thousands of students joined the protest, giving highly political speeches over loudspeakers and bullhorns. The protest continued until about 800 students were eventually arrested. Charges were levied against the organizers of the sit-in, which sprouted an even larger student protest that mostly shut down the university. Eventually the campus ban on political speech was lifted. On the fiftieth anniversary of this iconic event, *San Jose Mercury News* reporter Katy Murphy (2014) summarized the importance of the movement this way: “The free speech movement made an unmistakable stamp on a campus that prides itself on its legacy of social activism, and its spirit of protest quickly spread to colleges across the nation” (p. A1).

Freedom of speech is the bedrock of a democratic society. There is an inherent recognition in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that articulate speech can give voice to the voiceless and power to the powerless. Eloquence has

influenced the course of our history, as it did during the Free Speech Movement (*see access to links at end of chapter*). The oratory of Martin Luther King and others was a powerful instrument of the civil rights movement. Public speaking helped galvanize the Tea Party and the Occupy movements.

A wave of student protest, reminiscent of the Berkeley student uprising, has enveloped the United States in recent years (“Chasm in the Classroom,” 2019). Ironically, the Berkeley campus in 2017 was a prominent venue for *restricting* free speech. Massive protests were aimed at preventing controversial right-wing firebrand Milo Yiannopoulos and conservative pundit Ann Coulter from speaking on campus. Roughly three-quarters of the efforts to “disinvite” controversial speakers have come from liberal students and faculty, with the remaining quarter emanating from conservatives (McLaughlin, 2017).

Years ago, Nat Hentoff (1992) wrote a carefully reasoned critique of arguments offered by those who, often with the best intentions, advocate banning certain kinds of speech. His book was titled *Free Speech for Me—but Not for Thee: How the American Left and Right Relentlessly Censor Each Other*. The challenges to free speech on college campuses have only become more vocal in years since Hentoff’s defense of free speech (Chemerinsky, 2018). The mere threat of disruption from inviting controversial and provocative speakers onto college campuses can quash dissent—what Hentoff calls “the heckler’s veto.”



PHOTO 1.1: Mario Savio, a prominent student leader, giving a speech at UC Berkeley during the 1964 Free Speech Movement.



PHOTO 1.2: The Free Speech Movement Café on the Berkeley campus is a reminder of battles fought by students for the right to free expression.

Racist, sexist, homophobic, and xenophobic “hate speech” is repellant, and arguments supporting its restraint, especially on college campuses, can seem quite reasonable. For example, a national survey of college students revealed that a majority believe that “creating a positive learning environment for students by prohibiting certain speech” is more important than creating “an open environment where students are exposed to all types of speech and viewpoints . . . even if it means allowing speech that is offensive” (Villasenor, 2017). There is no consensus definition of hate speech, however. For example, one survey found that among those with college experience, 51% would ban a speaker who claims all White people are racists; 49% would bar a speaker who claims Christians are backward and brainwashed; 41% would ban anyone who says illegal immigrants should be deported; and 40% favor preventing anyone from proclaiming publicly that men are better at math than women (Crawford et al., 2015). Despite these results, survey data reveal that college students are less likely to support restricting free expression on college campuses than the general population (“Chasm in the Classroom,” 2019).

Regardless of your personal beliefs about rhetorical censorship, the Supreme Court and federal courts have consistently ruled in favor of relatively unfettered public speech (“Speech on Campus,” 2018). Campus codes that ban objectionable speech have been struck down (Chemerisnsky, 2018). Ironically, the hate speech code at the University of Michigan was used primarily against African

American students before the courts banned the code (Chemerinsky, 2018). As former ACLU president Nadine Strossen (2018) writes, such codes and similar laws “are predictably enforced to suppress unpopular speakers and ideas, and too often they even are enforced to stifle speech of the vulnerable, marginalized minority groups they are designed to protect.”

The legal standard for banning speech is understandably high. “It is not enough to be hateful; it must be imminently injurious (a “true threat”) or fall into a small class of exceptions such as child pornography . . . or the incitement of illegal behavior . . .” (Ceci & Williams 2018; see also Strossen, 2018). A majority of college students erroneously believe that the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution does not protect hate speech, and that it is acceptable for student groups to shout down speakers to silence them (Chemerinsky, 2017). University of Chicago president Robert Zimmer (2016) counters these preferences for censorship of speech: “Universities cannot be viewed as a sanctuary for comfort. . . . Having one’s assumptions challenged and experiencing the discomfort that sometimes accompanies this process are intrinsic parts of an excellent education.”

Without diving deeply into the complexities of implementing the dictates of the courts, the simple answer to offensive speech is more speech. There is “no satisfactory alternative to free speech” (Ceci et al., 2018, p. 312). Recognizing this, UC Berkeley responded to the 2017 free speech controversies by changing policies and rules to permit freer dissent on campus, chiefly by designating the West Crescent area of the campus a “free speech zone” available for large-scale demonstrations at any time with minimal restrictions (Bauer-Wolf, 2018). The Southern Poverty Law Center, a non-profit organization that monitors hate groups, suggests ways to protect free speech but still express opposition. These include the following: ignore the controversial speakers because they need an audience to gain media attention; turn your backs on the speaker (do not shout them down); and hold a counter-demonstration on a different part of campus before, during, or even after the offending event, offering speeches that educate listeners on the relevant issues (Newman, 2017). One additional suggestion is that you could attend the offending speech, display protest signs, and engage in animated, but civil, debate during questioning periods.

Imagine if this critical right in a free society to speak your mind in public were taken from you? In earlier times, women did not have to imagine it; they had to fight for the right. In seventeenth-century colonial America, a woman who spoke publicly could be dunked in any available body of water. When raised, sputtering and breathless, she was given two choices—agree to curb her offending tongue or suffer further dunkings. In Boston during the same century, women who gave speeches or spoke in religious or political meetings could be gagged (Jamieson, 1988).

“Offensive speech” is a moving target. What once was banned is permissible today; what once was permissible is now under attack. Battles are waged over permissible public speech because we all sense its capacity for influencing our beliefs and values on issues of critical importance. Professor Steven Pinker (2015) of Harvard University asks: “How did the monstrous regimes of the 20th century gain and hold power? The answer is that groups of armed fanatics silenced their critics and adversaries.”

There are many other important reasons to become a competent public speaker besides its powerful potential to produce often controversial societal change. College courses in diverse disciplines increasingly assign oral presentations. One massive survey revealed that 81% of first-year college students and 88% of seniors gave formal class presentations. A prodigious 92% of college seniors concluded that their knowledge and skills regarding “speaking clearly and effectively” were significantly enhanced by such training (“National Survey,” 2018). *Those of you who do become proficient public speakers, if done early in your pursuit of a college degree, will enjoy an enormous advantage when giving class presentations.* Relatively few students, however, see themselves as proficient public speakers prior to training (Eagan et al., 2017). Whether viewing oral presentations with reluctance or relish, you will undoubtedly be required to give them in your classes, so, practically speaking, why not learn to do them well?

Teaching, law, religion, politics, public relations, and marketing also require substantial public speaking knowledge and skill. A Prezi/Harris survey reported that 70% of employed Americans found public speaking skills to be critical to their career success (Gallo, 2014). Employers, however, do not believe most job applicants possess such skills, mainly because applicants have received little or no training in public speaking (Grant, 2016).

Competent public speaking is useful in other circumstances as well. Average citizens are frequently called upon to give speeches of support or dissent at public meetings on utility rate increases, school board issues, and city or county disputes. Toasts at weddings or banquets, tributes at awards ceremonies, eulogies at funerals for loved ones, and presentations at business meetings are additional common public speaking situations.

Competent public speakers possess an impressive array of knowledge and skills. They know how to present complex ideas clearly and fluently, keep an audience’s attention, analyze important issues, conduct research, make reasonable arguments, and support claims with valid proof. They entertain and also move people to listen, to contemplate, and to change their minds.

Given these bountiful benefits of effective public speaking, ***the purpose of this chapter is to begin exploring public speaking from a communication competence perspective.*** Toward that end, this chapter (1) defines both

communication and communication competence in the context of public speaking, and (2) provides general ways to achieve public speaking competence as a basis for more specific exploration in remaining chapters.

DEFINING COMMUNICATION

Communication is a transactional process of sharing meaning with others. **Public speaking** is fundamentally an act of communication in which a clearly identified speaker presents a message in a more formal manner than mere conversation to an audience of multiple listeners on an occasion to achieve a specific purpose. Explaining how public speaking functions as a transactional process begins our journey.

Communication as a Transactional Process: Working with an Audience

To understand the ways in which public speaking, as a communication act, is a transactional process, some basic elements need brief explanation. When you give a speech in class, you are the *sender* who *encodes* your ideas by organizing and expressing them in a spoken language. The *message* is composed of the ideas you wish to express, such as what your college should do about rising tuition and fees. The *channel* is the medium used to share a message, such as a speech presented in person or remotely in a podcast or YouTube presentation. The *receivers* are your classmates who *decode* your message by interpreting your spoken words.

This decoding process is no small challenge given the multiple meanings of most words, as Groucho Marx once illustrated with his famous quip: “Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana.” A *booty call* could be an invitation to a treasure hunt, or a search for something quite different. Consider actual newspaper headlines reported by the *Columbia Journalism Review*: “Prostitutes Appeal to Pope,” “Students Cook and Serve Grandparents,” “City Manager Tapes Head to District Attorney,” and “Kids Make Nutritious Snacks.” Imagine a non-native speaker of English trying to decode this sentence: “The woman was present to present the present to her friend, presently.” Lexicographer Peter Gilliver calculated that the seemingly simple word *run* has 645 separate meanings, the most of any word in the English language (Liao, 2017).

Then there is *noise*, or any interference with effective transmission and reception of your message. This might be a loud cellphone conversation just outside the classroom, tardy students arriving in the middle of your speech, or that nauseating feeling the day after too much partying that can interfere



PHOTOS 1.3 & 1.4: Julián Castro's daughter provides an adorable distraction (noise) during his keynote address at the 2012 Democratic National Convention.

with the quality of your speaking performance. Consider Julián Castro, who was mayor of San Antonio, Texas, at the time, when he delivered the keynote address at the 2012 Democratic National Convention (*see access to link at end of chapter*). He spoke this line halfway through his speech: “*Que Dios te bendiga—May God bless you.*” At that very moment, Castro’s three-year-old daughter, sitting in the gallery with her mother, was shown on the giant television monitor behind Castro repeatedly flipping her hair. The crowd began to laugh at this adorable child’s antic. Castro was clearly perplexed by this unexpected interruption. Afterward, Castro said that he was startled and thought, “What? You are not supposed to laugh at this part” (quoted in “Julian Castro’s Daughter,” 2012). This distraction was noise, an interruption in the effective transmission of Castro’s message to his audience, illustrating that public speaking is truly a transactional process.

Defining communication as a **transactional** process means that the speaker is both a sender and a receiver, not merely a sender or a receiver. (Listeners are likewise sender-receivers.) As you give a speech, you receive *feedback* or responses, mostly nonverbal, from listeners. This feedback *influences* you while you are speaking. In Julian Castro’s situation, he was distracted by the crowd’s response to his daughter’s hair-flipping. Transactional communication also means that there is more to a speech than the *content* (information) of your message. You develop a *relationship*, an association, with audience members as you present your speech. If they like you, they may listen to you; if they dislike you, they may not. For example, I had a Vietnamese student in one of my public speaking classes whose English was difficult to understand. He was genuinely enthusiastic when giving his speeches, however, and he was universally well liked by the class. So, whenever he gave a presentation, classmates would strain to discern what he

was saying, and they always gave him a rousing ovation after each speech, even though I am certain only the gist of his message, at best, was comprehended.

Effective public speaking blends excellent content with a strong audience connection. Neither one by itself is sufficient. A well-constructed speech may fail if either you or your message does not resonate with listeners. Conversely, a strong connection with your audience may not compensate adequately for a poorly constructed, rambling, or indecipherable speech.

Communication as Sharing Meaning: Making Sense

Public speaking as a communication act requires more than the mere transmission of a message from a speaker to receivers. The speaker hopes to share meaning with his or her listeners. **Shared meaning** occurs when both the speaker and receivers have mutual understanding of a message (Anderson & Ross, 1994). Something is viewed as “meaningless” when it makes no sense. For example, consider the story of a Catholic nun lecturing to her third-graders and conducting standard catechism drills. She repeatedly asked her students, “Who is God?” Her students were to respond in unison, “God is a supreme being.” Finally, she decided to test the fruits of her patient labor and called on one of the boys in the class. When asked, “Who is God?” he promptly and proudly replied, “God is a string bean.” Words were transmitted, but meaning was not shared. “Supreme being” to a third-grader is difficult to grasp as an abstract concept, but a “string bean” is a concrete understandable object, even if applying it to the divinity is theologically mysterious.

Similarly, a Civic Science survey revealed that 56% of 3,200 Americans opposed teaching “Arabic numbers” to school children (McCrae, 2019). Arabic numbers are simply numbers from 0 to 9. Apparently, respondents did not know this (words were transmitted but meaning was not shared), so they responded to the word *Arabic* only, considering it to be a negative term.

Sharing meaning requires that you tailor your speech to your audience’s ability to understand your intended message. Technical terminology or highly abstract presentations well beyond the knowledge and background of your listeners may merely confuse them, making your speech fairly pointless. “Geek speak” can leave the casual user of technology drowning in a sea of acronyms and jargon.

Sharing meaning between cultures poses its own unique problems. Accurate translations between languages are notoriously difficult. Electrolux, a Scandinavian manufacturer, discovered this when it tried to sell its vacuum cleaners in the United States with the slogan “Nothing sucks like an Electrolux.” In preparation for the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China, notoriously poor translations featured on English signs had to be revised. “Beijing Anus Hospital” was changed to “Beijing Proctology Hospital,” and “Deformed



PHOTO 1.5: Words matter, and in this case an incorrect, and weird, message might be shared. What do you think the intended message might be, because it certainly isn't to encourage swimmers to swallow water?

Man Toilet,” thankfully, was changed to “Disabled Person Toilet” (Boudreau, 2007). Soon after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, George W. Bush observed during a press conference that “this crusade, this war on terrorism, is going to take a while.” Bush used “crusade” to mean a vigorous action, but crusade is an explosively offensive word in the Muslim world, conjuring images of the historic clashes between Christians and Muslims. There was a huge outcry around the world from those who feared a renewed “clash of civilizations” provoked by the thought of a new crusade (Ford, 2001). Recognizing his verbal gaffe, Bush immediately dropped the term in future speeches and press conferences.

Sharing meaning nonverbally between cultures can be equally problematic (Cotton, 2013; Manolaki, 2016). World leaders, diplomats, and members of the business community have to be conscious of potentially embarrassing gestural misunderstandings when giving speeches. The A-OK and thumbs-up signs can be offensive gestures in many parts of the world. Raising the index finger to signify “one,” as Americans often do to signify “We’re number one,” means “two” in Italy, so the gesture becomes “We’re number two,” a less satisfying source of celebratory pride. In Japan, however, the upright thumb means “five” (counting



PHOTO 1.6: The thumbs-up gesture does not have a universal meaning of “good job” or a sign of approval. In Australia, Greece, and much of the Middle East, it means the offensive “up yours.”

begins with the index finger, and the thumb is the last digit). Nodding the head up and down means “yes” in the United States, and shaking it side to side means “no.” In Bulgaria, Turkey, Iran, and Bengal, however, it is the reverse. In Greece, tipping the head back abruptly means “no,” but the same gesture in India means “yes.” (Nod your head if you understand all of this.)

In review, communication is a transactional process of sharing meaning with others. Public speaking as a communicative act is transactional because as a speaker you both send messages to listeners and receive messages (feedback) from your audience members. You influence your listeners and they influence you as this constantly changing, dynamic process of sharing meaning unfolds.

Identifying and explaining public speaking as an act of communication, however, does not tell you how to become a competent public speaker. Many books, both academic and mass market, have been written that attempt to do just that. What they often have in common is extensive recipes with a narrow focus for improving your public speaking, but they are devoid of a strong theoretical model for such proffered advice. *This makes the advice seem more personal opinion and individual taste than sound practice based on research.*

In contrast, the communication competence model is a well-conceived theoretical model grounded in solid reasoning and research. It should serve as your overarching guide to public speaking excellence. Defining what it is and how to achieve it generally are the next points of focus.

DEFINING COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

Communication competence is *engaging in communication with others that is perceived to be both effective and appropriate in a given context* (Spitzberg, 2000). This section defines what it means to be both effective and appropriate when giving a public speech.

Effectiveness: Achieving Goals

Effectiveness is the degree to which speakers have progressed toward the achievement of their goals. In public speaking, you have general goals or purposes that you hope to achieve well, such as to inform, persuade, celebrate, entertain, inspire, or give tribute.

Degrees of Effectiveness: From Deficiency to Proficiency Some of you would rather be dipped in molasses and strapped to an anthill than give a public speech in front of your peers. Yet giving a speech to an audience of strangers may invite no more than mild concern for success. Competence varies by degrees from highly proficient to severely deficient depending on the current set of circumstances. Thus, you may see yourself as moderately skillful giving a well-prepared informative speech, but woefully deficient giving an inspirational speech. We are more to less competent, not either competent or incompetent. Labeling someone a “competent speaker” makes a judgment of that individual’s degree of proficiency *in a particular speaking context*, but it does not identify an immutable characteristic of that person.

Great speakers are not born that way; they become great, sometimes without realizing their potential until their hidden talent emerges unexpectedly. For example, a student in my public speaking class who experienced some trepidation about giving speeches gave a terrific persuasive presentation that argued for a smoking ban on campus. I encouraged her to present this speech to various decision-making bodies, which she did somewhat reluctantly. Her speech improved with each rendition, and it became so powerful that it provoked a campus-wide debate, and ultimately produced her desired result. When students express frustration at their perceived “powerlessness,” I relate this story to exemplify the “power of one.”

Even more astounding, Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg became an international sensation when her dogged attempt to alarm the world about climate change provoked worldwide youth demonstrations. What began as a one-person strike from school attendance displayed in front of the Swedish parliament building, six months later burgeoned into nearly 1.6 million young people in 133 countries demonstrating by leaving school as Thunberg encouraged (Haynes, 2019). Thunberg ultimately addressed the Houses of Parliament

in London, the 2019 World Economic Forum in Davos, the United Nations COP24 conference, and the EU Parliament in Strasbourg, among other august bodies. She appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine, and she was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize. One diminutive 16-year-old started a worldwide movement of protest (Knight, 2019). Never underestimate the potential power of public speaking (*see access to link of her speech at end of chapter*).

Audience Orientation: You Are Not Talking to Yourself To be effective, the key focus of any speech has to be on your audience. Topics that interest you, for example, may cause your classmates to do a face plant onto their desks. A speaking style that is florid with colorful language and weighted with complicated sentence structure and sophisticated vocabulary may confuse and frustrate listeners whose native language is not English.

Audience orientation can be complicated by today's ready access to information through multiple forms of media transmission. You may be speaking to an immediate audience present in front of you, but your speech may be transmitted to additional remote audiences, especially if it is posted on YouTube. For example, University of Iowa college student Zach Wahls gave a powerful three-minute speech to the Iowa State Legislature that was subsequently posted on YouTube and viewed more than 19 million times (Grim, 2014) (*see access to link at end of chapter*). Wahls's speech became one of the most talked-about public addresses ever presented by a college student.

Your topic choice, your purpose in speaking, the organizational structure and development of your speech, your style and delivery, and your use of supporting materials all must keep a focus on your audience's needs, views, and expectations. For example, *your first class speech* might be to introduce yourself (*see an example speech on anxiety in Chapter 2*). Your student audience is unlikely to find a long, rambling speech interesting. Provide relevant, interesting information about yourself. Basic background, such as your age, place of birth, length of time in your present location, places you have visited, reasons why you are in college, educational major, what you consider to be fun, what makes you laugh, and what you plan for a career are just some possible disclosures you might share with your audience. You want to be brief, conversational in style and delivery, interesting, and organized, because that is what your audience likely expects. Also, definitely don't read your personal introduction. That only makes it appear that you are your own intimate stranger who can't remember basic details about your biography.

Appropriateness: Speaking by the Rules

Appropriateness is behavior that is perceived to be legitimate and fits the speaking context (Spitzberg, 2000). **Context** is the environment in which communication occurs. Context is composed of who communicates what to whom, why

they are communicating a message, where it is presented, and when and how it is transmitted. For example, a religious leader is unlikely to use verbal obscenity during a sermon in a place of worship. To do otherwise would likely cause offense. A student leader, however, speaking to a student audience that has congregated in the campus quad may use some verbal obscenity to intensify his or her message without necessarily causing offense. Such language may even be viewed as more honest and credible (Feldman et al., 2017). When you change the elements of context, you change the rules that determine appropriateness.

Every communication context is guided by rules. A **rule** “is a prescription that indicates what behavior is obligated, prohibited or preferred in a given context” (Shimanoff, 2009, p. 861). For example, college instructors take for granted that students would not interrupt the flow of a lecture by talking inappropriately with fellow students. This is an implicit rule, meaning one that is assumed but not stated directly. Occasionally, however, this implicit rule has to be made explicit, identified directly, to students whose enthusiasm for casual conversation outweighs their ardor for the classroom task of listening to the professor’s lecture.

The relationship between speaking context and rules is often very apparent but not always observed. Weddings, for example, all too often provide opportunities for members of the wedding party, relatives, or friends to offer cringe-worthy toasts to the bride and groom. Toasted on too much alcohol, they make sexually suggestive comments, use vulgar language, and generally



PHOTO 1.7: Comedian Michelle Wolf caused a huge controversy at the White House Correspondents’ Dinner in 2018 regarding the appropriateness of her remarks (See [access to link at end of chapter](#)).

give an R-rated speech to a G-rated audience that usually includes young children. Despite obvious signals from offended listeners, the pickled presenters plod ever onward apparently unaware or unconcerned about their inappropriate behavior.

In general, competent public speaking requires both appropriateness and effectiveness. In the next section, global ways to do both are discussed.

ACHIEVING COMPETENT PUBLIC SPEAKING

The appropriateness and effectiveness of your public speaking can be improved in a variety of ways. This section offers five general ways (see Figure 1.1).



FIGURE 1.1: Communication Competence Model.

Knowledge: Learning the Rules

Achieving communication competence begins with knowledge of the rules that create behavioral expectations, and knowing what is likely to work effectively given the rules of the situation. There are no sacred, universal rules applicable to every speech situation, so such rules are contextual. In class, for example, rules operating for listeners typically include focusing on the speaker, not on your text messages, Facebook page, or social media; being an active listener; never heckling a classmate giving a speech lest you be given the same unwanted treatment; and not talking to classmates while a speech is being presented.

Rules, of course, can be changed. For example, research shows that rules regarding the use of swear words have changed dramatically. Swear words are 28 times more likely to appear in books recently published in English than books published in the early 1950s (Twenge et al., 2017). Whatever the prevailing rules, however, *communication becomes inappropriate if it violates rules when such violations*

could be averted without sacrificing a goal by choosing alternative communication behaviors.

Skills: Showing Not Just Knowing

A **communication skill** is the ability to perform a communication behavior effectively and repeatedly. Clearly, fluently, concisely, eloquently, and confidently speaking to an audience are examples of such skill. Knowledge about public speaking without speaking skills will not produce competence. You can read this entire text and excel on every exam, but there is no substitute for skill gained by the practice and experience of speaking in front of an audience. Knowing that speaking with long pauses and vocal fillers such as *um*, *uh*, *like*, and *you know* is unskillful and ineffective does not automatically translate into an ability to speak fluently. You will continue using vocal fillers unless you hone your speaking skills with practice.

Sensitivity: Developing Receptive Accuracy

Can you accurately perceive the difference between a look of disgust, anger, joy, agreement, frustration, or contempt from members of your audience? **Sensitivity** is *receptive accuracy* whereby you can detect, decode, and comprehend signals in your social environment (Bernieri, 2001). Sensitivity can help you adapt your messages to a particular audience in an appropriate and effective manner (Hall & Bernieri, 2001).

A major aspect of sensitivity is being mindful, not mindless, about your communication. You are **mindful** when you think about your communication and concentrate on changing what you do to become more effective. You are **mindless** when you are not cognizant of your communication with others or simply do not care, so no improvement is likely (Griffin, 2012). This text encourages mindfulness at every stage of speech preparation and presentation.

Commitment: Acquiring a Passion for Excellence

Commitment is a passion for excellence—that is, accepting nothing less than the best that you can be and dedicating yourself to achieving that excellence. To exhibit commitment, *attitude is as important as aptitude*. In sports, athletes develop a high level of skill when they commit themselves to hard work, study, and practice. Academic success also does not come from lackluster effort. You make it a priority in your life. The same holds true for competent public speaking. You have to want to improve, to change, and to grow more proficient, and you must be willing to put in the effort required to excel. You do not wait until the last minute to think about your speech, and you do not try to “wing it” with no preparation. “Winging it” just means flying blind right into the mountaintop of failure.

Ethics: Determining the Right and Wrong of Speaking

Humans ponder the moral implications of their behavior. It is one of the characteristics that separates humans from the beasts-as-feasts daily killing field that occurs on the African Serengeti. Consequently, you should consider whether your communication in the public speaking arena is ethically justifiable. **Ethics** is a system for judging the moral correctness of human behavior by weighing that behavior against an agreed-upon set of standards that determine right from wrong.

Ethical Standards: Judging Moral Correctness of Speech The National Communication Association's "Credo for Ethical Communication" identifies five ethical standards ("National Communication Association Reaffirms," 2017):

1. **Honesty.** "There is no more fundamental ethical value than honesty" (Josephson, 2002). Plagiarism—stealing someone else's words and ideas and attributing them to oneself—is clearly dishonest and is discussed in the next section.
2. **Respect.** Treating others as you would want to be treated is a central guiding ethical standard in "virtually all of the major religious and moral systems" (Jaksa & Pritchard, 1994, p. 101). Consequently, you should be respectful when others are speaking. Don't do an assignment for another class, for example, when other students are giving speeches.
3. **Fairness.** A debate in which one side was allowed to speak for 15 minutes but the opposing side was permitted only 5 minutes would be labeled as unfair. Fairness requires equal treatment and opportunity (Knights, 2016). "Playing by the rules" means avoiding favoritism. Whatever the rules, they should be applied without prejudice.
4. **Choice.** Our communication should strive to allow people to make their own choices, free of coercion (Cheney et al., 2011). Persuasion allows free choice among available options. Coercion forces decisions without permitting individuals to think or act for themselves. Shouting down speakers so they cannot give their speech is a bullying tactic that denies choice. The National Communication Association "condemns intimidation, whether by powerful majorities or strident minorities, which attempts to restrict free expression" ("National Communication Association Reaffirms," 2017).
5. **Responsibility.** You have an obligation to consider the consequences of your speeches on others (Jensen, 1997). Competent speakers must concern themselves with more than merely what works. For example, provoking listeners to engage in unlawful violence is irresponsible.



PHOTO 1.8: Heckling denies free choice by silencing the speaker. Can heckling ever be ethical?

In the abstract, these standards may seem straightforward and noncontroversial, but any list of standards for judging the ethics of public speaking, applied without exceptions, is bound to run into difficulty. For example, heckling a speaker is disrespectful, but is there never an occasion when heckling is the only means of communicating disagreement with a speaker? The Occupy movement's tactic in which an individual stands up in an audience during a speaker's presentation and calls out "mic check" has created quite a controversy since its common use in 2011–2012. As the original heckler barks out a sentence in protest to the main featured speaker, fellow protesters repeat each sentence to amplify their message. Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi was interrupted by the tactic in a September 19, 2017, news conference on the DACA immigration issue (see Sernoffsky, 2017, to access video of the event). On March 6, 2018, Lewis and Clark college students in Portland, Oregon, used the tactic to silence controversial ethics professor Christina Hoff Sommers (Soave, 2018). Protesters who use the mic check tactic argue that those individuals who are powerful easily gain access to the speaker's podium to express their ideas, while the less powerful must fight for the right to be heard (Kelp-Stebbins & Schifani, 2015). Targets of the mic check tactic repudiate it as blatant censorship.

This form of protest adds an ethical twist to the freedom of speech dialectic. The mic check tactic brings into focus a clash of ethical standards,



PHOTO 1.9: Some speeches are centered on ethical considerations. Here, former linebacker for the Super Bowl champion Baltimore Ravens, Brendon Ayanbadejo, an outstanding student of mine at Cabrillo College before he went on to UCLA and NFL All-Pro status, stands up for marriage equality based on fairness, respect, and choice. He was the first NFL athlete to take such a stand.

specifically: respect, freedom of choice, fairness, and responsibility. Applying ethical standards is not always clear-cut and obvious. Despite these difficulties, however, all five ethical standards are strong values in our culture, and they serve as important guidelines for ethical public speaking.

Plagiarism: Never Inconsequential With the explosive growth of the Internet and the easy availability of whole speeches by others, student *plagiarism*, the dishonest theft of another person's words, has become a significant problem (Ali, 2016; Fields, 2017). As the ready availability of technological tools to lift material in whole or in part from the work of others increases, the likelihood that plagiarism will occur also increases (Roberts & Wasieleski, 2012).

There are essentially two kinds of plagiarism. The first is *selective plagiarism*, or stealing portions of someone else's speech or writings. That is bad enough, but a second kind, *blatant plagiarism*—when entire speeches are stolen and presented as one's own—is far more serious. Some instances of plagiarism can seem harmless. For example, you hear a speaker offer this bit of drollery at a graduation ceremonial speech: “Lord, help me to be the person that my dog thinks I am.” It seems that you've heard this before. Then it hits you; it was on a bumper

sticker. No big deal, right? Relatively speaking, this qualifies as a minor example of plagiarism, but the speaker still stole it even if the author cannot be cited. If someone in the audience recognizes that this unattributed bumper sticker humor is not original, it calls into question whether other parts of the speech were also pilfered, and the speaker's credibility may suffer. The speaker could simply state, "I saw a bumper sticker the other day that said"?

Also, be careful that when you *paraphrase*—when you put the ideas of someone else in your own words—that you are not merely changing a word or two. Such *pseudo-paraphrasing* is still plagiarizing the main structure of the quotation. For example:

Original quote: "I don't intend to give a long speech. Well, because Socrates gave a long speech and his friends killed him" (Taken from the movie *New Year's Eve*).

Pseudo-paraphrasing: "I don't plan to give a long speech because Socrates did and his friends murdered him." This is still plagiarism because only a few words have been replaced with synonyms. In a case such as this, just attribute the quotation to the movie script. Such citation of the source doesn't diminish the cleverness or utility of the line.

Stealing someone's words is pilfering a part of that person's identity. That is never an inconsequential act.

SUMMARY

Competent public speaking is an essential element of any democratic society. It also provides many practical benefits. The communication competence model serves as a theoretical guide throughout this discussion of practical public speaking. Public speakers must make choices regarding the appropriateness and likely effectiveness of topics, attention strategies, style and delivery, evidence, and persuasive strategies. When you are giving a speech, you must be sensitive to the signals sent from an audience that indicate lack of interest, disagreement, confusion, enjoyment, support, and a host of additional reactions. This allows you to make adjustments during the speech, if necessary. Finally, the effectiveness of a speech must be tempered by ethical concerns. Prepare in advance so there is no temptation to plagiarize as a shortcut.

TED TALKS AND YOUTUBE VIDEOS

Noise: "Julian Castro's Daughter Flips Hair during DNC Keynote Speech";
"Daddy's Girl! Julian Castro's Daughter, Carina Victoria, Flipping Hair during DNC Keynote Speech"

Free Speech Movement: “Mario Savio Speech: Berkeley, January 1964”;

“Mario Savio Speech, short excerpt: December 2, 1964”

Audience Orientation: “Zach Wahls’s: ‘Two Mothers’ Speech”

Appropriateness: “Michelle Wolf Complete Remarks at 2018 White House Correspondents’ Dinner” (crude at times)

Power Of Public Speaking: “Greta Thunberg at UN Climate Change COP24 Conference”

Public Speaking And The Power Of One (Greta Thunberg): “Now I Am Speaking to the Whole World”

For relevant links to these TED Talks and YouTube videos, see the *Practically Speaking* Companion Website: www.oup.com/he/rothwell-ps3e. You can also gain access by typing the title of the speech reference into a Google search window or by doing the same on the TED Talks or YouTube sites.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Gain knowledge of the rules underlying what works and what does not in specific public speaking contexts.
- ☐ Practice speaking skills.
- ☐ Strengthen your commitment to becoming a competent public speaker.
- ☐ Enhance your sensitivity to audience feedback by being mindful of apparent weaknesses that need correcting.
- ☐ Uphold ethical public speaking standards.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Should Holocaust deniers and White nationalists be banned from speaking at public colleges and universities? How about Muslim speakers, atheists, and those defending Black Lives Matter? Should any provocative speaker who incites strong emotions and risks potential violent reactions from an audience be banned from speaking?

2. What principle should guide any determination of who should be allowed to speak and who should be banned? Where do you draw the line between permissible and impermissible speech?
3. How should racist epithets uttered by a speaker during a campus event be handled?

NOTE: Online **student resources**, such as practice tests, flashcards, and other activities, can be accessed at www.oup.com/he/rothwell-ps3e



Speech Anxiety

Rickey Henderson, longtime baseball star for the Oakland Athletics, fretted before giving a speech at the ceremony inducting him into baseball's Hall of Fame at Cooperstown on July 26, 2009. As he described it, giving a speech, especially of this magnitude, is like “putting a tie too tight around your neck . . . I’ve sweated to death about it and then wondered why” (quoted in Steward, 2009, pp. C1, C5). Henderson wisely sought help from speech instructor Earl Robinson at Laney College. He also received critiques from Robinson’s students, who were taking a summer public speaking class and heard Henderson’s speech. He practiced his speech for two weeks. One journalist, who listened to Henderson’s 14-minute presentation at the Hall of Fame ceremony, offered this assessment: “He seized the stage in Cooperstown, N.Y., and commanded it as he did as a player. . . . He wasn’t perfect, but he was pretty close. Moreover, he was gracious, highly effective, and suitably entertaining” (Poole, 2009, pp. 1A, 6A). Henderson “followed up his eloquent 2009 Hall of Fame speech in Cooperstown by nailing another address to the Coliseum crowd,” in a ceremony to rename a major league park as “Rickey Henderson Field” in Oakland, California in 2017 (Steward, 2017).

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss speech anxiety as a potential problem that you can address effectively, as Henderson did. Toward that end, this chapter discusses (1) the magnitude of the challenge of speech anxiety, (2) its symptoms, (3) its causes, and (4) potential solutions.

SPEECH ANXIETY AS A CHALLENGE

Speech anxiety is fear of public speaking and the nervousness that accompanies that fear. Why address speech anxiety so early in this text and devote a chapter to it? There are two reasons. First, when a speech assignment is given, the immediate concern you may have is fear of speaking in front of an audience, especially to a gathering of your peers. This fear can negatively affect your academic performance, not just in a speech class, but in any class that assigns an oral presentation (Bodie, 2010). In fact, the instant a speech assignment is announced, many students manifest high levels of anxiety (Jackson et al., 2017). This anxiety can preoccupy your thoughts and adversely affect your ability to prepare your speech. Some students may drop a public speaking course early in the term if speech anxiety is not addressed promptly.

A second reason to address speech anxiety now is that managing it effectively requires specific preparation. If you wait until you actually give your speech before considering what steps need to be taken to manage your anxiety, it is usually too late. Simply put, you need a clear plan for managing your speech anxiety, one that is developed very early in the public speaking process.

Pervasiveness of Speech Anxiety: A Common Experience

Mark Twain once remarked, “There are two types of speakers: those who are nervous and those who are liars.” Overstated perhaps, but fear of public speaking is widespread (Pull, 2012). A survey by Chapman University of 1,500 respondents puts the fear factor at 62% (“The Chapman University Survey,” 2015). This same study also showed fear of public speaking as greater than fear of heights (61%), drowning (47%), flying (39%), and, yes, zombies (18%). The fear of public speaking holds true for both face-to-face and web-based, online speeches given to remote audiences (Campbell & Larson, 2012).

A substantial majority of experienced speakers also have anxiety before presentations. Famous speakers throughout history such as Cicero, Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln, Eleanor Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Gloria Steinem conquered their significant fear of public speaking by taking every opportunity to mount the speaker’s platform. One study by Gordon Goodman of 136 experienced, professional actors found that 84% had suffered stage fright (Salomon, 2011). Actor Harrison Ford has feared public speaking his entire career. Even when the character he was playing in a movie was required to make a speech as part of the script (e.g., *Air Force One*), he admitted to feeling speech anxiety (Bailey, 2008), but he learned to manage it (*see access to Ford’s 2018 “Global Climate” speech at end of chapter*). Other celebrities who experience performance anxiety include Adele, Ariana Grande, Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, Lorde, Katy Perry,



PHOTO 2.1: Actress Emma Watson admitted, “I was just terrified,” when she gave her “gender equality” speech at the United Nations, but she was widely acclaimed for her moving presentation (see [access to link at end of chapter](#)). Speech anxiety can be effectively managed.

Rihanna, Sia, Jennifer Lawrence, Matt Damon, George Clooney, and Benedict Cumberbatch (Hickson, 2016). Even college instructors must manage it, and they do (Gardner & Leak, 1994).

Intensity of Speech Anxiety: Fate Worse Than Death?

Some surveys show that many people fear public speaking more than they fear death (Bruskin-Goldring Report, 1993; Thomson, 2008), prompting Jerry Seinfeld to quip that if you attend a funeral you would prefer being in the casket to delivering the eulogy. These “death before public speaking” survey findings, however, are dubious at best (Davies, 2011; Tuttar, 2019). Fear of public speaking might be on one’s mind as a more immediate stressor than death, but if forced to choose between imminent death or an imminent public speech, who would really choose death? Nevertheless, some individuals’ experience intense speech anxiety, and it should not be glibly diminished in importance. I experienced firsthand the challenge presented by speech anxiety (see “**First Speech**”), but I learned to manage my anxiety, and so can you.