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Doskonała
Nauka II

RECENZJA / REVIEW

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The book is dedicated to public speaking educators, practitioners and trainers because, as the editors write, we learn from each other. This is also the spirit in which this review is written. We will look at this book as a handbook not only for students who would like to learn about public speaking but also for lecturers who would like to learn how to teach public speaking. The description on the publisher's website states that “this (...) handbook will be an indispensable resource for public speaking instructors and program administrators. It will also be valuable reading for Communication Pedagogy and Introduction to Graduate Studies courses.” The addressees are well-defined, and sections of particular interest to particular groups can be identified.

As the authors point out the importance of context – cultural, racial, gender, social, and political – in public speaking education, let us immediately point out that this is an American textbook. Written by American authors (with one exception), it is grounded in the realities of the U.S. education system. However, for the readers from Central and Eastern Europe, where the status of research and teaching practice in public speaking is completely different, this academic output and practical experience are also important points of reference.

Three points seem to be particularly relevant in this context. Firstly, the handbook provides practical advice on how to teach public speaking today in the context of communication changes related to both digitization and the development of communication technologies. Secondly, the book emphasizes the relationship between public speaking and civic education for democracy. Thirdly, equality and diversity in public speaking education have recently become important topics. While European academics recognize and develop the first two points, the third one seems to be a challenge we are only beginning to face in our, slightly different, context.

However, let us begin by discussing the book's premise and structure. It is one of a series of communication textbooks published by Routledge. The volume's editors, Stevie M. Munz, Tim McKenna-Buchanan, and Anna M. Wright, are experienced teachers who have been organizing research and teaching at various levels of academic life in the U.S. The shape of the handbook also reflects well the synergy of their interests: from practical teaching solutions exploring the importance of communication and its diversity in workplaces, through the close relationship between communication and identity, to the value of narrative and storytelling in the development of individuals and groups.

The repetitive chapter structure allows the reader to easily navigate and find the topic of interest at any given time. References in the *Further Reading* section are very well chosen, and preceded with a short introduction, which is valuable for this highly recommended item.

The book's chapters are organized into six parts. The first of these parts, *Public Speaking as the Centrality of the Discipline*, presents public speaking both as a subject of research and as a subject taught at universities. This section is mainly historical, showing the development of the discipline and the links between public speaking and the rhetorical tradition, literary or theatre studies. From an Eastern European perspective, it prompts reflection on the similarities and differences in training paths and research developments on both sides of the Atlantic. It makes us painfully aware of the rupture of tradition experienced by academics in post-communist countries after the Second World War. It shows the socio-political and organizational conditions that enable the academics who teach public speaking in the USA to work within a clearly defined space. Meanwhile, rhetoric and public speaking teachers in most of the Central and Eastern European countries have only been trying to define this space for the last twenty or so years.

Joseph P. Zompetti, in the chapter entitled "A Historical Tracing of Public Speaking Pedagogy," argues that communication is one of the oldest subjects in education. However, at the same time, it is essential to learn anything else, which has not changed since the beginning of teaching. This belief in the unique importance of the public speaking course can be seen as a summary of the entire textbook. Zompetti points out the elements from the history of rhetoric that retain vitality and are helpful in pedagogy. These include the notion of topos, the concept of ethos, progymnasmata and argumentation. The argument continues with Adrienne E. Hacker Daniels and Christopher J. Oldenberg, who (in "Canons of Rhetoric: Building Blocks for Speech Construction") show the continuity of ancient rhetorical practices applicable in training modern speakers.

Part II: *Foundations of Public Speaking* discusses the elements from which public speaking courses are built. Perhaps this is the part that is most helpful to

students looking for practical guidance on how to learn to speak and what they need to prepare an effective speech. Scott A. Myers, Jordan Atkinson, Stephen M. Kromka, Sara Pitts, and Melissa F. Tindage (“A Communication Traits Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Public Speaking”) describe the classes of communication traits: apprehension traits, aggression traits, adaptation traits, and presentation traits. They show how public speaking courses can help address communication apprehension, receiver apprehension, argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, rhetorical sensitivity, and communicator style. Sara V.A. Kaufman (“Ethical Concerns in Public Speaking”) analyses the various ethical challenges facing speakers, future speakers and trainers today: from fake news to plagiarism.

Several chapters deal with the audiences – their initial analysis, behavior, and reception studies. Tim McKenna-Buchanan and Mary Lahman (“Listenability: The Art of Meaningful Public Speaking”), Jens E. Kjeldsen (“Rhetorical Audience Analysis and Reception Studies of Public Speaking”), Jackson W. Scott, Madalena Robertson, and Nicholas T. Tatum (“Audience Analysis in Public Speaking: A Comprehensive Exploration”) write about them in detail. All these authors emphasize the need for online communication to incorporate a global perspective combined with an understanding of and respect towards cultural differences. They draw attention to the increasing technological possibilities of tailoring messages to individual tastes and expectations. At the same time, this requires raising awareness of the ethical and moral responsibility of the speaker who uses the personal data of their audience.

As mentioned, the chapters in this part of the book are perhaps the most straightforwardly instructional. Students can benefit from advice on composition (Maria Hannah and Carly Densmore, “Approaches to Organizing and Outlining in Public Speaking”) or the use of visual aids (Adam C. Jones and Anna M. Wright, “A Clearer Picture: The History of Visual Aids in Public Speaking”).

The chapter on speech styles (Justin J. Rudnick, Douglas Roberts, Tennisha Sonsalla, Vanessa Fowler, and Caleb Webb, “Delivery Modes, Elements, and Exceptions: Exploring and Troubling the Canon of Delivery in Public Speaking”) begins a series of studies that may be of interest to a European audience. However, the chapters do not necessarily address issues that are central to the teaching practice today. The point is to recognize that existing patterns of communication – such as rhetoric, as derived from the Greco-Roman tradition – privilege certain speaking styles. Seemingly common-sense and neutral norms are bound up with cultural rules and values entangled in relations of power and privilege (based on gender, race, sexuality or (dis)ability). The authors call this challenge decolonizing delivery. It is also discussed more extensively by Sergio Fernando Juárez and C. Kyle Rudick in “Critical Race Theory Interventions for Public Speaking” and by Kristen P. Treinen in “Whiteness and Public Speaking.”

The theme of equal treatment is developed by Miranda N. Rouse, Kent R. Schafer, Darrin J. Griffin, and Cassidy Duncan (“Verbal and Nonverbal Communication: Creating Inclusion and Accessibility”), who provide instructions, among other things, how to teach public speaking to people with disabilities. Suzy Prentiss and Dakota Horn (“Exploring Speech Anxiety: Managing our Nerves to Share our Stories”) continue the theme of inclusivity in teaching public speaking by focusing on the neurodiversity of students. The chapter demonstrates the value of supportive and constructive feedback. Eddie Glenn (“Viva Lost Vagus: Yogic Breathing, Neuroscience, and Public Speaker Anxiety”) offers a range of practical advice on managing anxiety and stage fright.

Part III, *Issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Public Speaking*, contains the discussion of the challenges faced by lecturers today who want to teach public speaking reliably and responsibly to all students, regardless of their backgrounds. It is worth recommending to European teachers who are beginning to face the new expectations of students when working with increasingly culturally diverse groups. Kristina Ruiz-Mesa and Melissa A. Broeckelman-Post (“Relevant Today and Prepared for Tomorrow: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access [IDEA] in Public Speaking”) present public speaking as a tool for inclusion and advocacy, drawing attention to the need for greater inclusiveness of the materials used in teaching and of the forms of exercise to be taken by students. Kallia O. Wright, Luisa M. Cotto, and Zixiao Yang (“Accents and Dialects in Public Speaking”) develop the theme of equality concerning the language of expression.

Chapters by Cyndi Grobmeier and W. Bradford Mello (“Revisiting Public Speaking as a Liberal Art at Hispanic-Serving Institutions”) and Jillian Joyce Kaufmann (“Accommodations in the Public Speaking Classroom for Students with Mental Health Conditions”) describe the value of public speaking courses for groups with specific needs. The authors demonstrate that the skills developed in these courses enhance students’ individual competencies but also empower them socially. Robbie D. Hall and Darcy L. Wente-Hahn (“Access and Accommodation and Public Speaking”) discuss various aspects of accessibility of public speaking activities for people with disabilities. Amy May and Victoria McDermott (“Building Communication Competence through Public Speaking: Considerations for Faculty Outside of the Communication Discipline”) show public speaking classes as an opportunity to raise students’ self-esteem, strengthen their resilience, and develop appropriate coping mechanisms to deal with anxiety and uncertainty.

In Part IV: *Public Speaking Across Contexts*, the authors demonstrate the usefulness of skills developed through public speaking in the labor market, starting from the premise that rhetoric has always combined theory with immediate practical applications. Michael E. Burns and Joshua H. Miller (“Public Speaking’s

Transferable Skills for Industry”) point to five such skills in particular: audience adaptation, demonstrating one’s credibility, researching and crafting arguments, arranging those arguments in ways that are compelling and digestible, and delivery. Caroline Walbuesser and Francis Brandau (“Public Speaking in Business and Professional Settings”) discuss the most common speech genres used in business: elevator speech, interview, persuasive speech, informative and special event speech.

Part V: *Assessing Public Speaking* is addressed primarily to teaching professionals. It presents tools for monitoring and evaluating student progress. Two chapters deal with public speaking rubric (Cheri Simonds and John Hooker, “Measuring Student Learning in a College-Level Public Speaking Class: The Development and Evolution of a Rubric”; Drew T. Ashby-King, Lindsey B. Anderson, and Melissa A. Lucas, “A Critical Systematic Review of Rubric Research in the Public Speaking Classroom”). The authors focus on this tool’s usefulness for teachers in strengthening their knowledge and authentic assessment skills. Karla M. Hunter (“Assessment for Learning in Public Speaking Education: Best Practices for Design, Implementation, and Continuous Improvement”) discusses the various solutions that can be adopted in planning the assessment of student progress. At the same time, she emphasizes the need to consider a non-Western perspective, taking into account the demographic and cultural diversity of course participants in the design of an assessment system.

The final part of the handbook, *Public Speaking in the Twenty-First Century*, attempts to take stock of the new communication conditions. In the chapter entitled “Speaking Soundly: Post-Colonial Approaches for the Future of Public Speaking,” Sidi Becar Meyara suggests the usefulness of a post-colonial perspective in analyzing and teaching public speaking. It allows us to see the diversity of forms of dissent and incivility and develop ethical communication principles in a post-truth world. Brent Kice (“Online Speaking: Adapting to the Virtual Environment”) and Pat J. Gehrke (“Online and Mediated Public Speaking”) encourage the inclusion of online material as a set of examples to follow and, at the same time, teach students to prepare various forms of technology-mediated speech (in synchronous and asynchronous versions). Nick Linardopoulos (“The Case for Online Public Speaking Skills in the Communication Curriculum”) shows how online speeches can be integrated into the curriculum. Jeffrey H. Kuznekoff (“Digital Resources for Public Speaking”) discusses PowerPoint-type programs and demonstrates the need to teach the principles of designing and using online presentations as supports for public speaking.

These concluding chapters are somewhat vague, pointing in directions to be followed rather than specific detailed solutions and hints. However, they draw

attention to the important combination of tech skills and digital literacy, which today largely determines the effectiveness and efficiency of public speaking.

Chapters showing the correlation between the state of democracy and public speaking education run through the subsequent sections. Throughout the volume, one finds many strong arguments and indications of additional sources on the value of public speaking for democracy. References to various forms of developing the skills of speaking, arguing, and persuading (in debating clubs and tournaments, toastmasters clubs) show how rich and developed the system for educating speakers is.

J. Michael Hogan (“Public Speaking and Democratic Life: A Neo-Classical Rhetoric for the Digital Age”) discusses public speaking as a form of democratic valuable education in a situation of polarization and political division. The decline of citizenship is a result of the decline of civic education. One expression of this is the reduction of public speaking to a practical, helpful skill in the labor market, allowing entrepreneurs to succeed but not strengthening the citizenship. The latter needs more references to civic engagement, communication ethics, and civic virtue. Josh Fitzgerald, Kevin R. Meyer, and Stephen K. Hunt (“Persuasive Public Speaking: Considerations for a Post-Truth Era”) also write about post-truth and the challenges of misinformation, or the need to combine public speaking with information and media literacy. Today’s students need to learn to recognize fallacies in reasoning or identify source bias. Gabriel Wisniewski-Parks and Vincent Russell (“Democratic Education through Public Speaking”) write about deliberative democracy and its rhetorical tradition as part of important strategies in civic education and emphasize the need to include social justice, communication activism, and digital literacy into the curriculum. Kristopher Copeland and Ant Woodall (“Public Speaking in Action: Forensics as an Extended Classroom for Skills on Democratic Participation and Advocacy”) argue that since communication shapes democracy, the public speaking curriculum shapes democracy. This is why it is so important that students learn how to verify information and engage in decision-making.

The entire handbook can be considered an efficient and sound development of the arguments for public speaking that Joshua N. Westwick, Sherwyn P. Morreale, and Stevie M. Munz presented in the “Introduction.” Indeed, the authors and editors showed three levels of benefits of such classes. In the individual dimension, these are primarily self-confidence, expressiveness, sense of empowerment, critical thinking skills and life-long learning preparation. In the interpersonal dimension, public speaking enhances relationships, promotes a deeper understanding of other cultures, beliefs, and worldviews, and, consequently, fosters tolerance. It stimulates discussion and reflection on the ethics of communication. Finally, public speaking

strengthens civic engagement in the social and cultural dimension, often leading to social change. It can help to overcome polarization and division and nurture and develop knowledge and culture. This seemingly idealistic vision has been convincingly translated into concrete teaching solutions and guidelines that can help teachers and students move closer to achieving these goals.