Book Review

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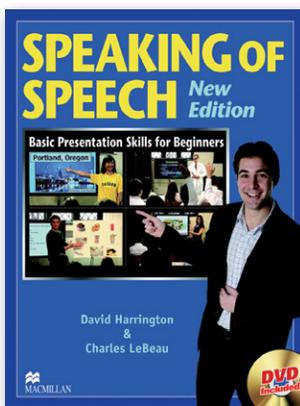
Book name:	Speaking of Speech: New Edition
Editors:	David Harrington & Charles Le Beau (2009)
Publisher:	Macmillan Education

Speaking of speech was written by David Harrington and Charles Le Beau, and first published by Macmillan in 1996, with a new edition being released in 2009 after over twelve years as a bestseller. David Harrington is a university lecturer, and managing director of a publishing company in Japan, who has more than two decades of experience in English language teaching to various types of learners in varying situations and contexts. He has co-authored many books, including; *Discover Debate, Getting Ready for Speech, Discussion Process, and Principle, What's in the Cards, and Street Speak.* Charles Le Beau, the co-author, is a former jazz musician, and teacher at two Japanese universities, as well as being a language trainer at the Toshiba International Training Center for more than twenty years. He has taught English since 1982.

The book divides the concept of presentation into three main areas. Referred to as "messages", these divisions are; *the physical message, the visual message,* and *the story message.* The eight units of the book deal with each of these in turn. Taking the student through a careful step by step process with thorough methodical planning and opportunities for practice individually, or through pair work and group work, building the student's confidence and experience towards a final, and more extended, presentation at the end of the course. There are examples, for each unit, of both strong and weak presentations provided by video clips on an accompanying DVD. There are also many illustrations and photographs to clarify the points being made, along with useful photocopiable materials for planning presentations, and both self-evaluation, and peer evaluation. Furthermore, each unit explains *what* the target skill is, *why* it is important, and *how* to use it, paving the way for the interactive practice sections which follow.

The Physical Message

The first unit begins the first part of the physical message, introducing the student to the importance of eye contact and posture as the foundation of the physical message. Learners learn what the inappropriate posture that might occur during a presentation, and practice the desired postures in group and individually. The DVD provides an example speech recommending a visit to the speaker's hometown. The final assignment of the unit

provides the guidelines for learners to prepare the informative speech in terms of content overview. In the performance part of the unit learners are afforded the chance to present an informative speech, either about their hometown, or another city of their choice.

The second unit focuses on the use of gesture in four categories, namely, *number and sequence, emphasis and focus, illustration and location,* and *comparison and contrast,* with illustrative examples. The DVD provides information regarding the layout of a convenience store to guide learners through incorporating appropriate gestures during a presentation. In the performance part, learners practice how to prepare the layout for a speech about a convenience, store, an amusement park, or school.

The third unit highlights the use of voice inflection to emphasize the key words and boost the interest of listeners during a presentation. *Stressing, stretching,* and *pausing* techniques are focused on in this unit. In the exercises, the learners initially practice how to use voice inflection utilizing these three techniques. They then go on to incorporate the gestures learned from the previous unit in the latter exercises. With regard to the performance part, episode three of the Speaking of Speech DVD provides an example speech on 'how to make a tuna sandwich', and here learners further analyze the use of gesture and voice inflection. In the final stage of the unit, learners perform a demonstration speech on how to make 'a favourite dish' resulting from the step by step guidelines they have followed.

The Visual Message

Unit four presents the implementation of effective visuals in speech preparation. To begin with, learners watch Presentation One of the fourth Episode of the DVD to get further understanding of how the visuals may affect the whole presentation. Then, the exercise encourages learners to analyze the problem of improper slides used in a presentation, and find possible solutions for them. Sequentially, the authors provide guidelines on how the visuals can be used effectively, as can be seen from Presentation Two of Episode Four of the DVD, where samples of several visuals are used for different purposes. In the performance section, learners are assigned to make comparative visuals of two countries.

The fifth unit, explaining visuals, presents further development on the implementation of visuals in giving speech. The lesson begins with a comparison of visual usage between two presentations, as can be seen on the

DVD. Highlighting the problems and solutions when using visuals in giving a presentation. In the later section, the authors provide steps and phrases for explaining visuals. In the performance section, learners prepare the visuals for a presentation comparing different countries.

The Story Message

Unit six begins with the first part of the story message, 'the introduction'. In this unit, the components of the introduction are divided into; *greeting* (getting the audience attention), *what* (informing the audience of the topic), *why* (the importance of the presentation), and *overview* (what points to listen for). Then, learners are guided through various exercises to make introductory phrases, listening to audio examples, and watching a model introduction of a presentation from the DVD. In the final part of the unit, 'performance', learners prepare to present an introductory speech regarding a product comparison.

The seventh unit focuses on 'the body' part of the story message. To begin with, the authors identify the important information that needs to be included in the body. Learners listen to presentations and identify whether the evidence provided is vague or specific, and what type of evidence is given in each presentation. In the latter step, learners practice giving 'concrete' supporting evidences in a presentation from different points. In the subsequent part, the authors introduce the use of several sequencers and transitions used in the body of the presentation, then provide practice for the learners. In the performance unit, learners prepare to present the body of a speech regarding a product comparison.

Unit eight delivers the last part of the story message, 'the conclusion', the unit begins with guidelines for making a conclusion, followed by several practice exercises, and shows the model of a conclusion from the DVD. In the performance part of the unit, learners prepare to make a conclusion of a presentation, again regarding a product comparison.

In the final section of the book, learners must incorporate all the skills and knowledge they have learned in class to perform a final presentation.

In summary, Speaking of Speech is a comprehensive guide for learners of English to conduct a presentation in the English language. As stated previously, this is approached, and clearly presented through the divisions of *the physical message, the visual message,* and *the story message.* The Illustrations, pictures, graphs, charts, and

photos all serve to enhance comprehension of the content. Useful phrases and expressions related to the topics are plentiful, and readily usable. The DVD containing demonstrations of 'good model' and 'bad model' presentations provide useful examples to complement the book. The final part of each unit provides learners with opportunity for practical demonstration of the necessary skills for successful presentation on any given topic. Finally, the book 'Speaking of Speech' enables learners to be competent and confident presenters. It is recommended for those who earnestly would like to develop their presentation abilities!