

## Book Review/ Évaluation des livres

*INTRO: A Guide to Communications  
Sciences and Disorders*  
Michael P. Robb

**Publisher:** Plural Publishing, Inc.

**Cost:** \$63.95 (CAD)

**Reviewers:** Tim Bressmann and Lynn Ellwood

**Affiliation:** University of Toronto

A good introductory textbook strives to get a student hooked on a subject. Books like Zimbardo's 'Psychology and Life' (1979) or Crystal's 'Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language' (1997) probably influenced the course choices and future careers of thousands of students. In 'INTRO', Michael P. Robb pulls out all the stops to make the disciplines of speech-language pathology and audiology come to life for undergraduate students new to the topic.

The book is divided into four sections. Section 1 provides background information on germane topics such as communication science, the profession of speech-language pathology and the relevant anatomy. Section 2 gives an overview of developmental communication disorders and comprises chapters on child language, phonological disorders, fluency disorders and cleft palate. Section 3 is entitled 'Acquired and Genetic Communication Disorders.' This section assembles chapters about voice disorders, neurogenic communication disorders (including aphasia and motor speech disorders), dysphagia and genetic syndromes. Section 4 is dedicated to audition and is comprised of two chapters, one on hearing disorders and another on aural rehabilitation.

Most of the book's chapters follow a fairly similar structure. Each chapter begins by stating a number of learning goals for the reader. After the basic concepts and anatomy have been defined, the historical background of the subject at hand is provided. This includes mention of historically important researchers as well as current leaders in the field, many of which are honoured with photos. Sections on clinical features and assessment are followed with descriptions of treatment strategies. At the end of each chapter, the reader is referred to a few websites and to select additional readings. The book also provides a well-written glossary and a detailed index.

Overall, the book has a look and feel similar to a high school textbook. There is a liberal use of figures, photos and diagrams in full colour. Keywords are bolded. One particularly engaging feature of the book is the use of little green 'For your information' boxes, which are sprinkled through the text. These provide relevant, or simply

entertaining, additional information. For example, some of the boxes provide information about the speech disorders of the Looney Tunes cartoon characters, a famous actor with a cleft lip, bird song, Beethoven's deafness, or Vincent Van Gogh's ear. Not all of them are immediately relevant to the topic but they add tremendously to the entertainment value of the book. The author's writing style is lucid and very accessible. The text avoids the constant citation of references, which improves the reading flow. In-text references are only provided when absolutely necessary.

Overall, this is a very interesting and well-written book that would be well suited as a textbook for an introductory course in communication disorders. The textbook differs from other introductory textbooks because a single author wrote the whole text. This gives the book an appealingly uniform look and feel. At the same time, the fact that all the information in this textbook was assembled and digested by a single author is also the downside of the book. The order of the topics follows the author's preference, but a course instructor may prefer a different sequence of chapters. The author cannot reasonably be expected to be equally knowledgeable in all areas of speech-language pathology and audiology, and, as a result, the descriptions of some disorder areas may look a little superficial to an expert in the area. Nevertheless, for an introductory textbook, the breadth of topics covered is admirable and the depth is mostly reasonable.

One feature that we found particularly fascinating was the emphasis on the history of research in different disorder areas. These descriptions are tied to the biographies and achievements of eminent researchers. While this information may be of less interest to an undergraduate student, clinicians and teachers will find these bits of information interesting. In fact, the text could even make an engaging read as a coffee table book in the waiting area of a speech-language pathologist's office.

### References

Crystal, D. The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language, 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Zimbardo, P.G. Psychology and life, 10th ed. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1979.

## Book Review/ Évaluation des livres

*Workplace Skills and Professional Issues  
in Speech-Language Pathology*  
Betsy Partin Vinson

**Publisher:** Plural Publishing, Inc.

**Cost:** \$63.95 (CAD)

**Reviewer:** Lynn Ellwood

**Affiliation:** University of Toronto

Experienced clinicians know that to function effectively in the workplace, it takes more than academic knowledge and clinical skill relating to communication and swallowing disorders. An understanding of professional issues is essential, along with skills for addressing and solving professional dilemmas.

As an instructor of a course on professional aspects of speech-language pathology (S-LP) practice, Partin Vinson has developed an in-depth understanding of the broad scope of information needed by professional graduate students and beginning clinicians for the practice context. In this textbook, she brings together widely varied yet important content areas in one convenient resource.

The book is organized into three sections. Section I is comprised of a single chapter, Getting the Job. This section contains useful information addressing resumes and interview skills. However, much of the information provided is generic. This chapter lacks specific information that is relevant to speech-language pathologists. It would have been nice if a sample resume had been provided.

Section II: Things You Should Know is comprised of six chapters covering a broad range of topics, including Information to Know, Universal Precautions, Case Law, Legislation, Ethics and Professional Standards. Much of the content in this section is specific to the American practice context, and Canadian readers may want to seek out additional material. One chapter that is relevant to speech-language pathologists everywhere is the one about Universal Precautions Against Blood-Borne Pathogens and Other Potentially Infectious Material. However, it is placed a little oddly in the middle of a book section that otherwise deals with legal and ethical aspects of the profession.

Section III: Workplace Skills, touches on 10 topics relating to the personal skills of the clinician: Clinical Decision-Making, Goal Setting, Counseling Patients and Caregivers Living with a Communication Disorder, The Supervisory Process, Leadership, Time Management and Organizational Strategies, Group Dynamics, Professionalism and Conflict of Interest, Conflict

Resolution and Stress and Burnout. The topics are all relevant to the practicing speech-language pathologists. However, no rationale for the selection of the topics is provided. The chapters are brief and to the point and the reader is introduced to literature from a wide range of sources. Because of the need for brevity with the ambitious scope of topics, the text can often only explain introductory concepts.

In the introduction of this book, the author admits to a 'hodge-podge' approach to her subject. Unfortunately, the reader will be inclined to agree. The book lacks a coherent argumentative framework. The layout of the book is uneven, which detracts further from the content. Sources of information are of questionable quality at times. Chapter summaries sometimes introduce new concepts or relegate the conclusions to quotes from other authors.

The aim of this book is a lofty one. The textbook is replete with facts and references to many sources. However, few S-LP-specific examples from professional work life are offered and little interpretation for the S-LP context is provided. The novice clinician may experience difficulty understanding the relevance of these topics without the context of clinical scenarios.



