

A reading response on jacob neusner "the speech the graduates didn't hear" essay

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



1. What does the title suggest to you about Neusner's speech?

The title "the speech the graduates didn't hear" can have two meanings. It can mean that this speech was never actually given to graduates and so they never got to learn what it was meant to teach. However, it can mean that this speech was simply not heard, that the graduates paid very little attention to it. After long years of constantly doing the same things, of not listening to teachers, of not learning from their mistakes, this speech was very likely to be overlooked. Jacob Neusner brings some very important points in his address to the graduate, he wants to teach them very important lessons that they did not get to learn and that they will definitely need in order to stay successful in the real world. The irony of it is simple. Since the former students may not have been even prepared enough to really listen to their speaker his effort may have gone to waste. The other possibility is that the now men and women simply did not believe him. They survived 4 years as they were, why should everything change now?

2. Who do you think Neusner's audience is? In other words, who is he speaking to in his essay? How did you decide who his audience is?

This speech was obviously made for a graduation ceremony. The author even mentions in the end that this is the day of commencement, the day of the start of the real life. The audience in front of him are graduates, teachers, parents and just guests. Although these words are directly for the former students, they are also supposed to influence the teachers who still have students to teach.

3. What do you think Neusner is trying to say about (a) students, (b) instructors and professors, and (c) colleges/universities in the United States?

Neusner's main point is that colleges and universities do not prepare their students for the real world. He shows that higher educational establishments are not demanding enough, that instructors and professors are not working hard enough. The staff of a university should care about their students, they should not let them slide and let them turn in mediocre projects. Students need to understand that the best is demanded from them and just something won't do. However, Neusner criticizes not only the staff. He points out that the students themselves are to blame. Just like professors need to push them, they also have to push their teachers but working hard, by trying their best, by inspiring their mentors to teach even better. Teaching and learning are connected. Both the teachers and the learners have to work together to achieve success.

4. What mood does Neusner seem to be in while writing this essay? What feelings do you get from Neusner's words? In other words, how would you describe his tone?

In his essay Neusner is not just teaching, he is showing his attitude toward the modern educational system. At the same time he seems angry, and frustrated, and hopeful that his words will get the kids in front of him ready for the outer world. He gives many examples from everyday university life and with each one he shows just how unthinkable this situation has really become. "Worse still, when you were boring, we acted as if you were saying something important." He criticized students, professors and the system. "And all this why?" He is outraged and wants his audience to see his point of view, to open their eyes. "Smiles and easy Bs" were the goals of the system.

He wants all of this to change and to become more appropriate for what the world needs.