

Speech Exemplars – Models to Imitate

Transcript of Episode 388

Julie Walker: Hello, and welcome to the *Arts of Language* podcast with Andrew Pudewa, founder of the Institute for Excellence in Writing or as many like to say, “IEW.” My name is Julie Walker, and I’m honored to serve Andrew and IEW as the Chief Marketing Officer. Our goal is to equip teachers and teaching parents with methods and materials, which will aid them in training their students to become confident and competent communicators and thinkers.

So, Andrew, do you remember what I said to you right when we were getting ready to record this podcast?

Andrew Pudewa: This is going to be my favorite podcast ever. And I said, that's a high bar,

Julie Walker: And then you walked into a room full of...

Andrew Pudewa: all my friends.

Julie Walker: So here we are with, well not all of your friends, because I don't think a room could hold all of your friends, but we have with us today, four guests in the studio, all who work for IEW.

And these, listeners, are our exemplars candidates...? I don't know what we, what do we call you guys? The people who told people how to do public speaking? Well, so we're talking today about our *Introduction to Public Speaking* course, and one of the things that we love to do at IEW is we love to not tell them what to do. We want to show them.

And so after every example, after every exercise, we have what we call exemplars. So we have with us today, Nathan, who did the exemplar for “Casey at the Bat.” Got a little story about that. We have Will, who's here today. He did the exemplar for a self introductory speech. We also have with us Michelle, who did the narrative speech. And then we don't have with us today Rachel, who did the expository speech, but I can tell you a little bit about that. Or Claire who did the persuasive speech. But then ending, we have Maria who demonstrated how to do an impromptu speech, so six different opportunities that we had for exemplars.

Andrew Pudewa: It was a lot of fun. I don't generally watch myself on video, but the little clips I have seen, I thought, wow, that's pretty good. Those guys make me look great.

Julie Walker: It's true, and I will just say, because I do watch this video over and over and over again, it's part of quality control, if that's what you call it. But I learned so much, and I've done talks before at conventions and led Bible studies and such, but since us releasing this course, I myself have learned a lot of different things that I've already started using in my public speaking.

So I'm happy to say that I—check—have used this course. I love it. And would say, everybody needs to go out and buy this if you want to teach your kids or yourself public speaking. Here's a story I have to tell you. So listeners, I just got back from Hawaii. It's true. My husband and I

went on a vacation, but one of our friends that we met while we were in Hawaii was Monica Swanson.

Andrew Pudewa: Oh yes, she's been on our podcast.

Julie Walker: Yes, she and her son, actually two of her sons are going to be doing the *Introduction to Public Speaking* course together so that she can improve her public speaking. And her son is actually going to be doing a little talk at one of her conferences that she's giving. So, yeah, we're really happy about that.

So, Andrew, when you had the students memorize poetry, one of the poems that you had them memorize was “Casey at the Bat.”

Do you want to just give a little bit of background about why we chose that poem for this course?

Andrew Pudewa: Well, it's a story poem. It's got a beautiful meter and rhyme scheme. It's a classic, like everyone should know that poem just to be culturally literate, and it has boy appeal. because of the baseball element, and it has the kind of surprise twist at the end. So I just think it's a model of a very engaging piece of poetry, and so that's kind of why I thought it would be a good one to use. Plus it's in the public domain and that makes a difference for accessibility for everyone.

Julie Walker: Now, what was your assignment that you gave the students? Do you recall?

Andrew Pudewa: I think just one stanza each.

Julie Walker: They had to memorize it and speak with expression. The students did not do that very well.

Andrew Pudewa: Well, it was the first thing, and a lot of them are in that age of being a little bit awkward and standing up in front of your peers and other people, and cameras in particular can cause people maybe to be less expressive than they would if they were relating a story or telling a poem to their friends or cousins or something.

So the pressure is there, but then that's what the whole course is about, is learning how to be your best, even under a little bit of pressure.

Julie Walker: Right, exactly. And ever the optimist, I was hoping that we could use the students as an exemplar in this case, and we decided to bring in someone to do a true exemplar. And that's Nathan. So Nathan, welcome to our podcast. So tell us about your experience in reciting “Casey at the Bat.”

Nathan King: Julie had given me the assignment to put that together, and I don't remember what the timeline was, but I thought, okay, I've got to break this down. I've got to do just what you

talked about Andrew, as far as, just do a bit by bit here. And I have a just not a terribly long commute to work every day, but I used that commute very well.

I would rehearse it and I would go over it over and over and again. And I got very excited about sharing this, and I did want to do it in a very animated way. And in fact, one time we actually had a staff meeting together. This, I think this may have been after we recorded it, it may have been before, I can't remember. But I was excited to share that with the rest of our staff. And so one person gave me a baseball cap that I put on backwards. And someone gave me some gum so I could have some gum so I could do the Babe Ruth kind of look or whatever. And I was getting ready to do this thing and I started, and we were right beside a church.

And apparently there was a wedding going on at the same time, and they asked us maybe to stop doing that. I do believe my superpower, if God has given me a superpower, is loudness of voice. Therefore, I stopped. So anyway.

I did notice just Andrew, what you talked about as far as like an engaging poem.

I actually gave this poem, I did a recitation for some of my nephews and or one of my nephews and nieces. They'd never heard it before. A lot of the younger students have not heard this one, and they were completely riveted. And it reminded me, just like what you said, you had some memorized repertoire you had in Japan of the Jack the Beanstalk, and you talked about how students were just riveted, and my niece and nephew were just, I guess, awestruck that I knew this poem.

Andrew Pudewa: Well, don't lose it. Say it often enough that you can recite it for your great-grandchildren 40 years from now.

Nathan King: I do recite it on the way home sometimes.

Andrew Pudewa: The other thing, I don't know if this is connected at all, but say the first line:

Nathan King: The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville Nine that day. The score stood four to two, but one inning more to play...

Andrew Pudewa: right? So you use that word brilliant a lot. And I don't know if it made its way to a more dominant place in your vocabulary because of having started the poem and having recited that line so many times. But it is interesting how when kids memorize poems, and they have words that are maybe a little off the ordinary, those words then move from kind of the passive vocabulary into the active vocabulary.

And that's a big plus for memorizing poetry. And one good reason we start with poems.

Julie Walker: Yep. So I have another little behind the scenes secret to share, and that is—when we invited Will to do our self-introductory speech, so we said, Hey Will, tell us a little bit about yourself. And he wrote this speech and it was so good, but one of the things he mentioned in the speech was to do something that we found out later was actually illegal.

And so we said, yeah, we're going to have to redo that one. So you'll notice if you have the *Introduction to Public Speaking* course, both Nathan's exemplar and Will's exemplar are against a black background because we had to do it without the students being present because we did this much later. So will you want to give a little bit about your story, about your self-introductory speech and what was illegal that you were asking these kids to do?

Andrew Pudewa: We are all dying to know what is the illegal thing that you did.

Will Schlueter: Well, when I was in Hawaii about five, six years ago, it was spring break, during one of my years of college with my dad. And we discovered there's this big staircase over the top of the mountains in, well near Honolulu. And apparently the stairs used to be open for anyone, but they've kind of gotten run down over the decades and unsafe. And so they've been locked down. But thrill seekers will still sneak in. There's not much. There's a little fence or something to get past. And so there's many stories online of people that have sneaked in and gotten up there. And unfortunately what happens is a lot of people make it halfway up and then they lose their nerve or they get too tired and then they end up having to be rescued by helicopter, and that's very expensive for the city.

So that, I think is the big reason that they're now thinking about just removing the stairs altogether, unfortunately.

Julie Walker: So you do mention it as almost in passing with the exemplar that it would be nice to be able to do.

Will Schlueter: Yes, and there was talk for really the last twenty years about maybe rebuilding the stairs much more safely so that people could do that. And so that's kind of what I had in mind during this speech. But now it sounds like they're just going to remove the stairs.

Julie Walker: So Nathan had an easier task in the sense that his content was already written. You of course had to write your own content because when you're doing a self-introductory speech, you have to come up with your own content. Can you describe a little bit about that process?

Will Schlueter: Yeah. I think one thing that I really observed during the process of writing it was that we all have those kind of interesting experiences to share. We might think we live a completely ordinary life, but I think every one of us has a completely unique story. So for me, after a little bit of thought, I realized hey, I have 3, 4, 5 really cool things I've done in my life that other people would love to hear about. And I think if any of us would sit down and do a little bit of that thinking—maybe it's a famous person we met or a cool place we've been to, but it's really a journey of self-discovery and what you realize is that your story is worth sharing.

And so it is a really cool experience for me.

Andrew Pudewa: I would say that one thing that makes that interesting and engaging is a level of detail. People are telling you what happened to them. The more they can paint the picture, the more you can feel like you're there with them or you, you're seeing it happen, then the more interesting and engaging it is. And so I think Will did a great job in adding enough detail that his old boring life looked a lot more interesting than maybe it would've if it had been more of kind of a grocery list of things. So that's one of the things we're trying to promote in kids' writing, writing in general, speeches, but that when you're talking about yourself in particular. What will draw the person into the shared experience you had?

And usually it's that detail.

Julie Walker: Yeah. And Will, in your few years on this earth—you're a third of the age of Andrew and me—you've definitely packed a lot of interesting content into your speech, even ending with your aspirations to become a pilot of which you are now.

Andrew Pudewa: I just want to point out that Julie's math is pretty bad, and so her third is not a very accurate estimate. I know Will's age, and it's more like two and a half.

Andrew Pudewa: rather than 3 times. But I guess if you're rounding

Julie Walker: I was going to say, my math isn't bad. I just know how to round. I'm in marketing. I exaggerate, I suppose.

Well, the third type of speech that was given that you instructed the students how to do was the narrative. And of course, being the Institute for Excellence in Writing, we have a model for how to write a narrative using the story sequence chart.

And so we just applied that to doing a narrative speech. And of course, our exemplar was Michelle. So Michelle, welcome to our podcast,

Michelle Buscemi: Thank you. I'm happy to be here.

Julie Walker: Your Story. I had never heard your story before, and it was so good. So please tell our listeners a little bit about your story.

Michelle Buscemi: Well, it's not one that I like to share very often, but now it's forever recorded, so I'm working on my humility. But I tell these students who are in high school kind of my adventure into the big wide world after I graduated thinking I was ready to be all Miss Independent. And it relays the story of how I'm in Europe and newly into a school year, find myself being carted away from the campus in an ambulance by German speaking ambulance people to the hospital and how embarrassing that was and how it taught me a lesson, right? Because stories are there to teach of asking for help when you need it, and being independent isn't all cracked up to be. So yeah, it was, it was a good time, and it was humbling.

Julie Walker: And we did not have to redo yours at all.

Michelle Buscemi: No. Fortunately I don't know how I got so lucky.

Andrew Pudewa: And I had never heard that story until that moment that she stood up in front of the whole class and the cameras, and I was just captivated. It was so engaging.

Julie Walker: Yes, yes. And of course Michelle, you do have a background in speech and debate, so you want to share a little bit about that.

Michelle Buscemi: Yes, I competed in a homeschool speech and debate league during high school, so I did a lot of debate. I did memorized speeches, kind of like the one I did, better at some than others. Yes, that was definitely the most informative and impactful experience of my high school, and it really has done so much for confidence and just being able to hold yourself well in public.

And I think largely the reason I was able to tell an embarrassing story in front of cameras was because of that competition in high school.

Andrew Pudewa: I think it's worth mentioning also that Michelle ended up marrying her debate partner, which was kind of against all odds from my perspective. But, the years passed, and the relationship blossomed and it was a delightful thing. So join speech and debate. You never know who you might meet.

I do a lot of long talks and none of these speeches were very long. But when you go and talk for an hour, you really do have to incorporate all these aspects. You have to give a little bit of information about yourself and your life because people want to know. You have to realize when the audience is starting to maybe drift their attention a bit and get a story in there so that now they're engaged in a narrative. And that story has to apply to the overall message that you are trying to do.

So these speeches are short and specific, but they're all there. Therefore, the reason that they are components of effective presentations that may be significantly longer.

Julie Walker: You mentioned two things, Andrew, just now that. I think you made very clear in this *Introduction to Public Speaking* course, and that is you need to know two things before you start speaking, and that is how long should this speech be? And Nathan, you had a memorized poem; Will, how long was your speech supposed to be?

Will Schlueter: about three to five minutes.

Julie Walker: Michelle, how long was yours?

Michelle Buscemi: I think it was about three to five minutes.

Julie Walker: Yep. So these were very short speeches, and I think it's interesting, Andrew, that you say when you notice the audience is starting to... so you need to pay attention to what's happening in the audience. You need to be comfortable enough with public speaking that you can get outside yourself and look at the people in the eye of who you're speaking and finding out whether or not they're starting to nod off. So you need to switch to a story.

Andrew Pudewa: and we've all sat through talks where some academic is just reading a paper and you're just like, why am I even sitting here? Just give me the thing and I'll read it. Or someone who's so caught up in their own content that they're oblivious to the fact that you wish you could leave now, but you can't because that would be rude.

So there is that skill of being sensitive to the audience, and there's no substitute for that in terms of training. You've just got to get out in front of people.

Will Schlueter: As a musician I remember reading about the famous Russian pianist, Vladimir Horowitz, and he once said that during a recital, if he didn't hear anyone coughing, he knew they were really connected with the music. And if they did start coughing, he would always speed up a little bit to get them back into what he was playing.

Julie Walker: I like that. I like that. Now, the next speech that we did that you taught was the expository speech. Now, we don't have Rachel here, but I will tell you a little bit about her presentation. First I want you to explain Andrew to this audience, what is an expository speech?

Andrew Pudewa: Well, the Latin is *ex* and *posit*, which means *to place*, so you're putting something in front of people and it usually is considered to be a teaching kind of speech. You're sharing information generally with a friendly audience. There's no need to persuade or necessarily motivate specifically, and you're just teaching, sharing, speaking about something that you know that you hope would be of interest for other people to know.

So that's generally what you would think of in expository.

Julie Walker: Right, and so Rachel did an expository speech on a capsule wardrobe.

Andrew Pudewa: Oh yes,

Julie Walker: Do you remember that? Yeah. And I loved this idea. She's a college student or she was a college student. She's now graduated and married and off to law school. And she also did some competitive forensics in college. More about that in just a second.

But her talk about a capsule wardrobe was basically invest in high quality clothing, but fewer pieces that you can then reuse at various times. So a good coat, a good comfortable pair of shoes. Anyway, it was fascinating and I just love that I walked away with not only learning some of the practicality of coming up with the topics, coming up with the attention getter, and then walking away with a call to action.

How many of us have a closet just bulging full of clothes?

Andrew Pudewa: As I recall hearing it, and I think I was somehow getting a little Marie Kondo, The surprising joy of being organized or something. And I went home, and I just got rid of a bunch of clothes I never wear. And I continue. In fact, as a result of that, I have this strict rule. If I gain a piece of clothing, I get rid of a piece of clothing.

I have not yet managed to convince my wife of the benefits of this. It was a good talk.

Julie Walker: It was very good. And then following the expository speech, you talked about persuasive speaking. And basically there were two goals of persuasive speaking. One was to move someone further along to what they've already believed so that they could now do something about it. The other side that's probably even harder is to take someone from a position and change their mind to something different.

I don't know if you remember this speech, Andrew, but Claire I believe did a really nice job of converting most of the audience to believe that stress is actually a good thing. Because so often we're told stress is bad, stress causes bad health. But the outcome in her research was that stress actually resulted in a positive, positive effect.

Andrew Pudewa: When you think about people in the world who have greater impact, usually they have more stress in their life. So if you're afraid of stress, it's almost like you're going to be afraid of making a difference and doing hard things.

Julie Walker: Yes. And so Claire, she of course, exemplified a memorized speech, but we don't require students to memorize their speeches. But they're writing them. And Andrew, talk about the process from coming up with the idea and writing a speech and then turning it into a speech.

Andrew Pudewa: Well, we are encouraging people more or less to make an outline from their idea what they want to accomplish, narrative, expository, persuasive. And then write it. And then make an outline from their written out speech to assist them with delivering the speech, either with minimal notes or eventually memorizing it, depending how much time and effort they have to put into that.

So it is kind of, well, why do that? Why not just talk from the outline? But as anyone knows, when you really work on how you're going to say something, you just improve the overall quality of language, the preciseness. The use of words, you avoid repetitive vocabulary. You avoid cliches that may detract from the effectiveness.

So when you write, you're really polishing the thought itself. Then you make an outline from your more polished thought, and then you can deliver a superior product. So it is a longer process, but the result is, it's so significantly better.

Julie Walker: Yes, exactly.

Andrew Pudewa: I would mention in competition you have to submit the script of your speech, so they're expecting that you've written the whole thing out.

You can't just submit an outline and say, here, I'm going to talk from notes. That's not part of the way the speech and debate world operates.

Julie Walker: So there's the sixth speech that we did that was required. Actually, you weren't allowed to prepare and that was the impromptu speech, and so you had a little bit of time to prepare. But we had Maria, and there's so many things I could say about Maria.

Maria, we affectionately call her our Podcast Princess. Andrew, you and I sound better than we actually are because she edits our podcasts and writes up the show notes for us. And so listeners, if you're ever clicking on one of the links in our show notes, you know you can thank Maria for that. But Maria also has a little background in competitive speech and debate, and even on into college.

So Maria, talk about your background and then talk about the type of speech that you gave for our *Introduction to Public Speaking* course.

Maria Buscemi: Absolutely. I too did speech and debate. I actually did speech and debate with Michelle, and Michelle is actually married to my brother. So just a little bit of background there. Speech and debate was extremely formative. I would say in this, just in the sense of exposure. If you want to get better at public speaking, you have to expose yourself regularly to the activity, and I definitely attribute most of my ability to just communicate both orally and in written language, to having done speech and debate throughout high school and now in undergraduate at the University of Oklahoma, I'm actually the president of the mock trial team there, so I do a lot of public speaking regularly, both impromptu and prepared. It's a mix of both. So for my impromptu speech, I came into the studio in like a typical impromptu speech, at least in the league that I competed in. You pull from three topics, and you have two minutes to prepare a speech on one of those topics.

So the topic that I chose was a quote by Kipling, and it is that “words are of course the most powerful drug used by mankind.” And this one immediately appealed to me. I am pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in the humanities specifically, and so I definitely believe in the power of the word, especially to change people's hearts, to change people's minds, to change really the course of history. So, yeah, it was very scary. I will say that the nerves don't ever really go away. I had two minutes to prepare, I think about like a three minute speech. So it was fun though. It was fun. It was exhilarating, I'd say.

Julie Walker: Yes. I remember when we were asking if you would be one of our exemplars because you were away at school, and we had to coax you to come back up here. We said, well, what speech do you want to give? And she said, Impromptu. That's your favorite.

Maria Buscemi: It is fun and it requires the least amount of preparation.

Andrew Pudewa: And I remember listening to it thinking I couldn't do that well. That was better than I could have done. You had more practice in a way. Yeah.

Julie Walker: Yep. So you can see all of these exemplars and more in our introduction to public speech. Well, when I say more reports, Rachel and Claire are not here today, but they all did an excellent job. And you'll see some of our students do a mildly decent, pretty good job for being in front of cameras. And some of them were brand new to public speaking. Very nervous.

Andrew Pudewa: All the exemplar people are a bit or a lot older than the students. So, and that's fine because you want something to be able to look at as a model and say, I want to strive to be that good.

Julie Walker: Exactly. Exactly. Well, I'd love to go around the room and starting with Nathan and ending with Maria and then you, Andrew. Why is learning public speaking so valuable?

Nathan King: So there's a quote recently I think in a podcast that we heard from Jordan Peterson talking about how lethal we are as writers, right? And the written word. But of course the reality is that in the modern day, so much of how we communicate is through the spoken word. And so while the formation of thoughts and the honing of our thinking, writing is so essential there, the actual delivery of that is the spoken word.

And it really doesn't matter if it's in video or if it's live. I mean, this is what's going to make a huge difference in the culture.

Will Schlueter: I think when we hear about language arts, we immediately think of workbooks, grammar, writing, obviously reading, but I think speaking and listening are just as important, if not more, and it's like language arts but more direct. And it brings a little bit of excitement to students because you get that little bit of nervousness in a way that you don't when you're writing or reading. And so I think public speaking is hugely formative for communication.

Michelle Buscemi: I would say fear is temporary. Confidence lasts. So, often students will either hate the idea or be kind of drawn to the idea of public speaking. So how much better would it be to equip them with a confidence that's going to serve them well into their adulthood in order to be able to communicate when we so desperately need communicators?

So it's worth the hard work. It's worth getting over the fear in order to nurture someone who can contribute.

Maria Buscemi: I think that when you're in your high school years, or even younger than that, I mean, I started speech and debate when I was 12. It's a really sensitive time for you where you're easily able to be molded. And so I think that taking a public speaking course when you're in your high school years is going to be so much more formative than when you start later on, which is why I think that students really should start right now.

It's kind of like what I said earlier. The more you expose yourself, the more confident you are going to be and being able to not just speak publicly, but just to speak with your colleagues, to speak with your peers, to speak with your professors, whatever profession you have to go into, being able to communicate effectively is extremely important.

And so I think that students should take it because it's going to serve them well in the long run.

Julie Walker: Wow. Andrew, can you top that?

Andrew Pudewa: No, I don't even want to try. That's excellent. I especially like that idea that fear is temporary and confidence is lasting. I'm just going to hit on a super practical point. I have been to more weddings in the last couple years than I would have wanted to, honestly. I mean, I'm always glad I went. But one of the things you have to suffer through are the speeches at weddings, and I find this somewhat interesting just because of my background in public speaking.

And I remember one wedding in particular, the maid of honor—she was so organized. She had it down; she had practiced it. She knew exactly what she was going to say. It was a delight to listen to. And the poor best man just floundered around with, “you know,” and “ ‘cause” and a thousand likes. And dude, why? Why was this poor man so embarrassing?

Because he hadn't had the training, he hadn't had the opportunity.

We can't fault him for his own incompetence and ignorance. It was a lack of education. So if for nothing else, you may be called upon to give a speech at a wedding someday, and you don't want to embarrass yourself and your side of the table. That's my practical point.

Julie Walker: Well, dear listener, I hope you have enjoyed this podcast as much as Andrew and I did. I think when I was first trying to imagine us doing this, our room was very small and how to get this many people in this room. But yet I think the energy that we've had here today and the message that you all gave was so powerful.

So I'm really grateful for all of you and for you, Andrew. Thank you.

Andrew Pudewa: Thank you.

Julie Walker: Thanks so much for joining us. If you enjoyed this episode and want to hear more, please subscribe to our podcast in iTunes, Google podcasts, Stitcher, or Spotify. Or just visit us each week at IEW.com/podcast. Here you can also find show notes and relevant links from today's broadcast. One last thing: would you mind going to iTunes to rate and review our podcast? This really helps other smart, caring listeners like you find us. Thanks so much.