

## Podcast 426: The Great TWSS Adventure

### Episode Transcript

**Evan Smith:** So hopefully, you know, get some encouragement there to do the practicum, get your training done in the summer, and then go all in, With all the confidence that you need,

**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.

**Julie Walker:** Well, Andrew, May is winding down.

**Andrew Pudewa:** And what does that mean,

**Julie Walker:** it means several things. It means that Teacher Appreciation Month is almost over, which we did a podcast on that. It also means that summer vacation is about to begin. And we did a podcast episode on how to help homeschool kids not suffer from evaporation over the summer, right?

**Andrew Pudewa:** Right. Things to do.

**Julie Walker:** Yeah, things to do to help them keep their mind sharp. But I also wanted to take this time to talk about one of the principles that Stephen Covey talks about in his *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.

**Andrew Pudewa:** I hear that's a good book.

**Julie Walker:** Yes. Well, and actually there's a student version of it as well that I've referred to, in fact I've done talks on occasion

**Andrew Pudewa:** Wait, let me guess, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Students*?

**Julie Walker:** Something like that: highly effective teens.

And so it's about... I've done talks on study skills and refer to that book because the habits are the same. They're just applied a little differently in a school environment. But let me just quickly name off the seven habits. And it's actually habit number seven that we're going to camp on for a little bit today.

So habit one is be proactive, which I love that story. And I don't want you to tell it now, but I love that story where you talk to teens and you tell them how to do well in school and

basically to own your own education and take responsibility for your own education. And that's a habit of being proactive.

Habit number two, which cracks me up that this is number two. Begin with the end in mind. I often wonder why that isn't habit one because that's begin. Begin with the end in mind.

**Andrew Pudewa:** Well, you have to have at least some initiative to actually begin anything. So, I guess that, be proactive is a precursor to beginning, and then the actual beginning would be to begin with the end in mind. We'll put it that way. He must have thought this through.

**Julie Walker:** I'm sure he did. Yeah, I'm sure he did. And you're absolutely right. It totally makes sense. But I do think it's funny that we begin with the end in mind. Step two, but I think about, again, a story that I'm not going to have you share, teasing you. Listener, we'll put links in the show notes of Andrew's talk.

**Andrew Pudewa:** We have to do an extended episode of all the stories that Julie never let me tell during this episode.

**Julie Walker:** During this episode. Oh, we could. No. Okay. Well, this is a story that you tell in *Nurturing Competent Communicators* where you say in answer to the question to a mom who's holding a baby, what can I do to help this child become a good writer? So that's a mom who's thinking the end.

**Andrew Pudewa:** What do you want 20 years from now?

**Julie Walker:** exactly, exactly, and so that's habit number two, begin with the end in mind, and habit three is put first things first.

**Andrew Pudewa:** Priority

Exactly, and I think about a little story you tell the teens again in our *University-Ready Writing* course about prioritizing their tasks and the value of that and using the ABC 1 2 3. method of that, that actually Stephen Covey teaches. So prioritizing, putting first things first.

**Andrew Pudewa:** I should try that myself. Might help. I

**Julie Walker:** One of my favorites is the Habit 4: think win win. And that's the kind of networking idea where if there's a solution that works for you and works for someone else, that's what we're really looking for. We're looking for the win wins.

**Andrew Pudewa:** if he coined that because it's such a cliched thing now.

**Julie Walker:** Right. I don't know. It doesn't have a TM or anything like. And then I like this, this is a, actually, I would call this a Judeo-Christian philosophy and that is, seek first to understand, then to be understood. To love and to show love to one another is to be listening.

**Andrew Pudewa:** Listen before you speak.

**Julie Walker:** There's another story that you tell. Synergize. Kind of the idea of putting things together, putting people together, put a team together. I love working with teams. I know you know that, Andrew. Finding the team that works together well, and you can accomplish a lot, a lot more than just one person sitting in a room figuring out what to do next. So synergize. And then habit seven, which is really what this episode is all about, which is Sharpen the Saw

**Andrew Pudewa:** Sharpen the saw.

**Julie Walker:** Sharpen the saw. Yes, think about the woodcutter who is cutting down trees or a carpenter who is sawing logs. And after a period of time, that saw will get dull.

**Andrew Pudewa:** I haven't done any cutting of trees too much, but I do cook a lot. So having a good sharp set of knives makes all the difference. And so I can relate kind of to the knife better than the saw.

**Julie Walker:** How time would it take you to cut up, you know, a dozen onions if your knife was dull?

**Andrew Pudewa:** Well, actually, I don't know it's the time so much as the quality of...

**Julie Walker:** True. True.

**Andrew Pudewa:** But both is true.

**Julie Walker:** both. Takes time and yeah, probably wind up cutting yourself with the knife.

**Andrew Pudewa:** And let me guess, you're going to segue this into the idea of polishing your skills as a teacher of Structure and Style.

**Julie Walker:** You are exactly right, Andrew Pudewa. You know, so here's a not too well kept secret, but Andrew Pudewa is able to read upside down, and so he is seeing the notes on my desk in front of him. And I am not showing them to him, but he is already seeing what we're going to be talking about today.

**Andrew Pudewa:** That's an exaggeration. I can read upside down, but I cannot read that small of print from this distance. I'm just guessing because of who else we have in the room, what we're going to be talking about and trying to inspire people to sharpen up the saw of their structure and style.

**Julie Walker:** So at the same time that we're telling parents and teachers of students, don't waste the summer. Take advantage of the opportunities in front of you to help your student continue to learn and grow. Same thing with teachers. Don't waste the summer. Yes, absolutely. We are all about re-creation, the whole idea of resting and being able to do well

because you're rested, but also taking advantage of the opportunities in front of you to hone your craft, to learn your skill. And we have two specific ones that I'd like to talk about today. And we do have a guest here in our studio. He is Evan Smith, and he is in charge of our accreditation team. So welcome to our podcast, Evan.

**Evan Smith:** Thank you, Julie. Hi, Andrew.

**Andrew Pudewa:** Good to have you here, Evan.

**Julie Walker:** So Evan has multiple roles here at IEW as is pretty common. He's also an Educational Consultant in the schools division. And he works with our accredited instructors who either want to apply for accreditation or maybe renew their accreditation. So we have some opportunities for professional development. I want to mention two of them and then ask Evan to drill down a little bit more on the second one.

So the first one is our virtual *Teaching Writing: Structure and Style* workshop. And this is a three-day, three Tuesdays in June, where you, Andrew, are teaching virtually an audience of teachers, and these teachers could be our traditional full time classroom teacher, a co-op teacher, a tutor, or an administrator. So basically, if you're teaching a group of kids in any capacity, the virtual *Teaching Writing: Structure and Style* workshop is what we advise you to participate in. There is a fee to attend this. With that fee, you receive a *Seminar Workbook*, you get a year Premium Membership. And as soon as you register, we get those materials out to you so that you can actually start the course early. So Andrew, you are teaching this course going through the nine units just like you did on the video, only taking the time to answer questions, giving opportunities for those teachers to actually do the practicums during the breaks. So do you want to speak to that at all?

**Andrew Pudewa:** Well, there's so many options for schools and teachers. One, of course, is to get the videos, watch the videos together, or to have teachers watch the videos independently. And that works, but there isn't that—what was that word you used synergy? That it's an okay method of the transfer of information, but it doesn't quite hold the power of a live event.

**Andrew Pudewa:** Another option, of course, is to have one of us go to your school and that has the advantage of the live event focus, a little bit of synergy, q and a; you can look over people's shoulder as they're doing stuff. But the downside is we cram way too much into one or two days. So, it's a little mental indigestion is usually what people experience. And then they have to go and review that later on with the videos.

So this is kind of, I think, a good balance here because if we're going to stretch it out over three sessions, we're going to put some space in between the sessions. And we're also going to have hopefully the level of synergy we can achieve in a virtual environment. And of course, we're hoping that people will indeed take the time to do all of the practicum exercises in between those weeks.

So we haven't really done it exactly this way before, so this is a new, it's not quite an experiment because we know how it will come out, but it's a new option for implementation that hopefully will work for schools that are too small to have someone come, schools that

you'll only have a couple of teachers that they want to start with, or schools that want a full out review for the new school year, and that's happening in June.

**Julie Walker:** Great. Three Tuesdays in June, and we'll of course have the link in the show notes. And if you haven't heard about this, then kind of shame on us because we are letting everyone know about this *Virtual Teaching Writing: Structure and Style*. We're just delighted, Andrew, that we have expert master teachers. And then our new implementation coach, Jeff Neese, will be doing some of the sessions as

**Andrew Pudewa:** And we'll have a team of people ready to sort and focus and shoot the questions to us..

**Julie Walker:** Yep. Really, really looking forward to that opportunity. Another opportunity, and this is the second one that we wanted to talk about, and the reason we have Evan here in the studio to help us kind of unpack this, is the Great Teaching Writing: Structure and Style Adventure that we do every year. And we're doing it a little bit differently this year, Evan.

**Evan Smith:** Yes, we are.

**Julie Walker:** So you want to explain that?

**Evan Smith:** Well, we always have a good time, Andrew, when we sit down and get about a half hour to go over the units, everything that they're going to watch in *Teaching Writing: Structure and Style* for the week, answer questions, encourage them to do the practicum assignments, learn by doing, and try to make that point, encourage them to become accredited, finish the job, send it in, and move on. So sharpen the saw.

**Julie Walker:** Right, but we're doing this year, a little bit differently because we're allowing for a full hour of that time. And oh, by the way, I should mention, this is completely free, except that teachers need access to the *Seminar Workbook* and this, the, either the streaming or the DVDs or the *Teaching Writing: Structure and Style* course, but we're adding another component to it

**Evan Smith:** That's right. So Andrew and I always have a good time. It's actually a bit of a different feel when Julie comes in because we always inevitably start talking about products and that's why I talk about every day, but that's what we do. That's where the gold is for teachers, for every setting, to work through this in a proven format.

So this year we'll make it relevant for everybody by bringing in what you'll actually be doing during the year. We'll, of course, talk about structure and style through the *Teaching Writing: Structure and Style* seminar. But then we'll dig into *Structure and Style for Students* and all of the checklists. And that will actually help to see the EZ+1 teaching method in action because we like to pile on, we have to, in the training seminar to get everything in there. And so you've got these checklists that build, and that can be very intimidating to people, especially once you get to Unit 7, Unit 8, Unit 9.

So we'll be able to go over that, but also dig into levels A, B, and C of *Structure and Style for Students*, share some of the checklists and some of the source texts that they'll be working with and get to see how this actually relates once they get to the year. So hopefully, get some encouragement there to do the practicum, get your training done in the summer, and then go all in with all the confidence that you need.

**Andrew Pudewa:** And just to clarify that the virtual TWSS, that's three days over three weeks, complete course, and then the Great [TWSS] Adventure is once a week, each unit for how many weeks?

**Evan Smith:** We do the nine, nine full sessions so we can cover the nine units.

**Andrew Pudewa:** And that's not teaching the course. That's kind of commenting on and answering questions and encouraging the teacher. So these are two separate events, although they're both happening this summer.

**Julie Walker:** This summer, and, and sometimes there's confusion. Think of the Great TWSS [Adventure], it's going to take a few more weeks, several more weeks. The cost is less, significantly less, but it's not going to provide as much help. So if you are looking to, if you're a classroom teacher and are looking to get help because you're new to IEW or you need a refresher... And Andrew, you and I have talked about this before. When I first started this whole IEW journey, of course, it was the Teaching Writing: Structure and Style. And of course, you taught "Book Lice." Today, you still teach the Teaching Writing: Structure and Style. And of course, you still teach "Book Lice." But what I love about how we're differentiating here in the Great TWSS is we're showing that you wouldn't necessarily teach "Book Lice" to your students because that's a...

**Andrew Pudewa:** Here are the options for source texts at an appropriate reading level. Yeah. I, I have to interject here though. The most common way that I use the word *adventure* is when something goes wrong.

**Julie Walker:** Oh, dear.

**Andrew Pudewa:** And I have to philosophically say, "Well, it's an adventure." I used this a great deal the last trip I took with my wife because there were all sorts of things that were not quite as had hoped or expected. And, you know, the tendency is to complain, but what's the point of complaining when you're on a vacation? You might as well just chalk it up to adventure.

So in my mind, adventure is more the process of overcoming inconvenience or disappointment so that you get a good end. And I think that could be a little bit the case. Because, you know, who wants to do a writing seminar where you have to actually write stuff and take time out of your actual free time to do this tedious thing just so you become a better teacher.

**Julie Walker:** So that you can become a better teacher. I would say that's a pretty good end.

**Andrew Pudewa:** So it's, it's inconvenient, but it's an adventure

**Julie Walker:** I like that. Very good. Very good. So, Evan, tell, talk more about what you do as the person who oversees the accreditation. Even start with why do we even have such a program?

**Evan Smith:** Yeah, so you get the call to action, you know, from Andrew to, well, you, like you say, feel your students' pain to do what they're going to do. In jest, you say that in the, pretty early on in the seminar, so they know what's coming. It's really the best way to experience it. You always like to talk about how Dr. Webster would teach by showing student samples. And the seminar workbook is full of them. And that's where I like to send people if they need help first, so they can actually see it in action. But doing it, getting a feel for it. Then, you send it in to us, you can make sure that you got it, because we're gonna go through the checklist, we're gonna grade just like you're gonna grade. And if it's not, you got to do what you check, you check what you do. If it's not there, you're going to need to do it.

**Andrew Pudewa:** Because we use the A/I grading model, it's a hundred percent accomplished, achieved, accredited (A), or not finished yet, incomplete (I).

**Evan Smith:** You'd, I'm sure be amused. Sometimes people want to argue with the points that we put on the checklist as examples of how you could grade, but that's not how we're grading. We're going for mastery here. Do your best, it doesn't have to just be perfectly, it can be a little awkward, just like with your students, but we are going to give you our backing, that you know how to teach Structure and Style. So you're going to show that you know how to teach Structure and Style, but you can be assured of that if you send it to us.

And that lasts for two years, and then you can renew by continuing, listening to some podcasts, going back through our teaching approach, not just Structure and Style, but it all fits together. If you continue with Great Adventure every year, then for sure, you will be able to sharpen that saw more and more, and that's what we encourage you to do as well, and that's why we have this, so that you're not just like, yeah, I'm an accredited instructor, but we approach writing as a skill set. So you gotta keep practicing that skill. And so we want to, we'll back you up on that, but you have to keep doing your part so that you can see the success with your students. But that's what our accreditation department is for: to make sure that the fidelity is there so you can get the most results when you're in the classroom with whatever grade level you're teaching.

**Andrew Pudewa:** So, the teachers who want to do this have to complete the practicum assignment for all nine of the units. They need to use the checklist that's provided.

**Evan Smith:** The checklist that's provided, yes.

**Andrew Pudewa:** And they have to do all of the indicators, underline and dress up, sentence numbers in the margin, topic clincher, highlight or bold, all the rules. A lot of people, I think, probably get up to Unit 6 or 7 and they just start to bristle. It's like, "ah, do I have to do this?" And I think there are a couple good analogies. One would be the gym. The other would be a musical instrument. You know, and we all kind of will hit a plateau. I remember learning a new piece of music and just thinking, "I'm not getting it and I'm not getting better."

And it's just weeks and weeks and I'm still just feeling stuck. And then boom, kind of a breakthrough, you know, and the same thing with pushing weights around, you just feel like you're kind of stuck, but then because of persisting, you get that critical mass of experience, and effort, and then a breakthrough. And I think a lot of people. Do you find that they kind of, by the time they get to the end, they hit a plateau or two, but then they say, "Oh, I'm so glad I stuck with it? I really understand it better."

**Evan Smith:** Yes, yes, absolutely. Sometimes they'll come in there, great, they did a great job writing, but there's no indicators all the way through, because they didn't get the point from the beginning. And I'm so glad that they applied because otherwise they never would have, and they may have taught their kids that way. Well, let's check. You put it in there, but you want it to look nice. No, we want all that stuff in there so that we can grade on Structure and Style. You know, that's what we are doing so that you can have those skills, so that your students can have those skills.

But yes, it's usually Unit 6 that people start getting a little tired. Unit 7, you've got to write a whole five-paragraph essay. Now Andrew walks you through that, so he does a lot of the work with you to start, but, it's an effort that you have to put in. But it's well worth it. And once you get the grasp of this process versus product all of the things that we, that Andrew teaches throughout the seminar on just the approach of doing it.

It really brings it to life, and by having somebody else actually say, well, this is good. You've got something going here, but here's what we're doing. And if you want to do it our way, which we guarantee success through that, then here's what you fix and go forth accordingly.

**Andrew Pudewa:** We do charge a fee, which is reasonable because your time and for the accreditation, not for watching the Great Adventure videos, but for the accreditation process and we send a certificate.

**Evan Smith:** Get a little icon in your email that you can put on your website.

**Julie Walker:** I do want to speak to that because, Andrew, for what it's worth, it's actually worth a lot, much more than the small application fee that we require. Because one of the projects that you assigned to me that we actually worked on together was setting up this accreditation program. And we set this up over 15 years ago.

And we just thought, we're just going to try this and see if we need to make any changes to it. And over the years, we've only made very minor changes to the program. But essentially the problem that we were trying to solve was, this misunderstanding of people who say they're teaching IEW, but they're not teaching the whole syllabus. They're not, they're just throwing in an -ly dress up and...

**Andrew Pudewa:** Or making up some of their own rules along the way. And so protecting the fidelity, and not just the fidelity, but the results that people will get if they do it the right way.



**Julie Walker:** Yes. And we actually have three levels of accreditation that we set up. The first level is the registered level. And Evan, that just demonstrates...

**Evan Smith:** Yeah, that's the most important one. That's the practicum assignments primarily that you're sending in all of your work.

**Julie Walker:** Yes, and I know some parents or teachers who basically that's their assignment for a semester in high school: become a registered instructor. And so these are high school students who are going through the paces. Maybe they've done IEW for several years, and now they go through that teacher training course and they say, "Oh, that's why you do that thing. I get it." But then perhaps they can go off to college and learn how to teach

**Andrew Pudewa:** Yeah, or they can start teaching younger children in their community or school or whatever and gain a little teaching experience even while they're still in high school.

**Julie Walker:** And that teaching experience is what we ask certified instructors. So registered is the first level. Certified instructors, they have to do student samples, just like you were saying, Evan. That's the best way for you to be able to see, oh, yes, they really know our method because their students are, maybe they don't have all the dress ups.

**Andrew Pudewa:** But whatever they've taught is correct.

**Evan Smith:** Yeah. In that level, we ask for samples from the beginning of the year and then the end of the year, preferably from the same students so that we can see that, but that also encourages the instructor as well.

**Julie Walker:** So we have hundreds of accredited instructors at the registered level. I would say dozens at the certified level. It's definitely, the bar is higher. And then we have a handful of those at the accomplished level. And we pretty much, that's one of the changes that we made. We pretty much decided that anybody who is actually working directly with IEW, whether you're an online instructor or you're actually writing curriculum for us, that would be at the accomplished level. That means you know the program so well, you could teach other teachers.

And we actually watch for that. We're looking to see if people are saying, I'm an IEW teacher. If you say you're an IEW teacher and you're not accredited, chances are we're going to be contacting you saying, stop saying you're an IEW teacher because you need to be an accredited instructor through IEW in order to say.

So yes, it gives us an opportunity to both recommend and encourage. Recommend teachers that are accredited because we've vetted them. You, Evan, and your team have vetted them. And be able to recommend these teachers or actually help them become better writing

**Andrew Pudewa:** And then we list them online. So if someone was listening, they said, "well, I really would like to find an IEW teacher either in my community or online." We have the teachers that we have accredited on that list.

**Evan Smith:** Right, that's one of the perks. Also, if you're in a school, a full time school, we have our school's registry, so parents who might be looking to put their students in a school, but would like to have the full, the real IEW experience, our registered level on the school registry means that we know the school has trained, at minimum, they've either been out or they've been a part of the virtual teaching writing structure and style, so we can say, you know, they've got things going.

Then we have the certified level for the school registry, which means they have at least one officially accredited IEW instructor on staff who can hopefully serve as a mentor and then they can grow from there. But we cover all bases if you want a private instructor, we list you on there if you're accredited instructor then the school registry so we can vouch for some of those schools as well.

**Andrew Pudewa:** All right.

**Julie Walker:** So both of these two training opportunities that we have this summer can lead to the pathway of becoming an accredited instructor, perhaps, but ultimately we are providing opportunities for our teachers to sharpen the saw.

**Andrew Pudewa:** Have we heard from anyone who did it in a past year, the Great Adventure thing, and then wanted to do it again?

**Evan Smith:** Well, it's fun since I've been doing this with you a few years. We recognize names at this point, you know, so I know that's out there. I'd like to think it's going to grow as we do this now, as we mix it in and make it a little more relevant to what they're actually going to be doing in the year. But yes, that's why it's survived as long as it has. And it has the opportunity to expand a little more.

**Julie Walker:** Yes, yes, it's a great opportunity, and it's really a delight to have hundreds and hundreds of teachers become a part of this Great Teaching Writing: Structure and Style Adventure. Some of the, some of the perks that you would get if you sign up, and we'll put a link in the show notes, you are able to get an email invitation to attend the event.

So you're reminded these are going to be Wednesday afternoons at one o'clock, from one o'clock to two o'clock.

**Andrew Pudewa:** Central time,

**Julie Walker:** Correct. Very good, Andrew. The *Teaching Writing: Structure and Style Seminar Workbook* is required to go through the program, but other than that, you can just enjoy the ride, and you, Andrew, and you, Evan, will be, for the most part, it'll be you and Andrew.

Every now and then, it will be an adventure to find out who's going to replace Andrew because he's out traveling somewhere, right? But then, of course, we have the virtual *Teaching Writing: Structure and Style*, and this is a paid three week, every Tuesday course, that is pretty much all day, where Andrew is going to be teaching live the *Teaching Writing:*

*Structure and Style* with the whiteboard, with some PowerPoint slides, and you'll get the full enchilada with plenty of jokes as well.

**Andrew Pudewa:** the Megillah.

**Julie Walker:** Megillah. Well, thank you, Evan, for being a part of our podcast today. Thank you. I hope, dear listener, that you will consider one of these two opportunities to sharpen your saw.

**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, Stitcher, or Spotify. Or just visit us each week at [IEW.com/podcast](http://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.