

Episode 430: Live Ask Andrew Anything

Episode Transcript

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: So welcome everyone to our Ask Andrew Anything podcast. We do these every ten episodes and starting at episode 400, we started doing these live. So we have a few of you who are here with us listening in. Many of you submitted some really great questions that we will get to.

But today, as we've started doing, we're going to have one of our beloved affiliates kick this off with asking the first question. So, Nicki, thank you for joining us. Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you recommend of IEW, and then you can give Andrew your question.

Nicki Truesdell: Sure. Well, thank you for having me. This is fun. I'm Nicki Truesdale, and I have five children. Three of them are adults now, so I'm only homeschooling two at this point, and they are 13 and 16. I'm also a grandmother of two little ones. And I also was homeschooled in the 80s. And so obviously it's changed quite a bit since then, but it was something that I loved and I knew that I would always do with my children.

And so all five of my children have only been homeschooled their whole lives. And as far as IEW goes, I love *Structure and Style*[®] [*for Students*] and *Fix It!*[™] *Grammar*. My kids do too. In fact, when my daughter just recently finished her *Fix It! Grammar*, she immediately asked for a new one. So, that's a

Julie Walker: Who does that? Who asks for more grammar?

Nicki Truesdell: She said, I really like this grammar, Mom. So anyway, both of my two youngest kids that are still schooling have done *Structure and Style* and now they are in the *U. S. History-Based Writing Lessons*. So we're really enjoying that.

Julie Walker: Great. Okay, and your question for Andrew

Nicki Truesdell: My question is something that I get a lot from other people and that is, how much grammar and writing do you think is necessary throughout K-12, all the years of a child's schooling?

Andrew Pudewa: So I usually answer that question with a comparison to music education. How much music should you have? The answer is clearly not zero and it's a little bit like money in the bank. The more you practice, the more you study, the more you do it, the greater the benefits. And I think the benefits go up, almost not, maybe not exponentially, but,

but they go up significantly, kind of like interest will accumulate. So the more reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking that you do, the better you're going to be at all of those things. And so one answer would be a little bit every day. Another answer might be, well, do you want to maximize the benefits that you can get from it? And if so, do you need to sacrifice something in order to do more?

So, I don't think there's a one size fits all answer to this particular question. I'm curious, how do you answer the question if people say, well, how much writing do I need to do with my kids?

Nicki Truesdell: The way I usually answer this is, um, And, and this comes from questions where a parent will say, we're doing grammar, we're doing grammar, we're doing grammar, and, and they know it, they're sick to death of the same grammar. And so what I tell my readers is that I don't do it every year. I alternate grammar and writing back and forth so that they're changing up what they're doing.

And I always do recommend IEW because even the writing lessons reinforce all of the grammar. And so. I do believe they should always be reading and writing, but I have encouraged my families to say, look and see if your child is, is maxed out on grammar practice, take a break from it and, and do reading and writing this year and then go back and mix it up.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah, I think that's a very valid answer. Children really love variety which is one reason why, with our program, and I think this is unique to the structured style approach, is that we alternate between these units over the course of a year. So a little bit of narrative story writing and then some report writing and then some creative writing from pictures and then some research and then some inventive “write about anything you can think of,” and then write some formal essays, critiques.

And so they're changing throughout the year, whereas other approaches to teaching writing kind of, it's like the same thing, week after week after week after week for a whole year, and it does get tedious.

I do believe that technology will atrophy the skill which it replaces. And so we see this. It's that if children learn how to use calculators, they stop believing that mental math has value, thereby depriving them of learning to think mathematically in a more intimate, personal, interior way. If you show them how spell checkers work on a computer, they will stop believing that there's any value in knowing how to spell words, thereby depriving them of a more intimate understanding of their own language.

Now we have ChatGPT, AI. Well, it can write better than you can, so why should you bother to learn to do it? And I think you would probably agree with me that the whole end of it all isn't that you become a better writer for being a better writer's sake, it's so that you acquire better thinking skills, and those are cross applicable to anything you do in life, whether the tasks you have require much in the way of writing or not.

So I think we want to be very careful about allowing this AI to atrophy the skill which it replaces, and this is probably the most dangerous iteration of that because we're not talking

about just mental math or spelling. Now we're talking about actual construction and communication of thought.

And so I think we should probably err on the side of teaching more and then figure out what is going to be less important or where do we steal the time from. A book you might really enjoy, if you have not read it, is *How to Think Like Shakespeare* by

Nicki Truesdell: Okay.

Andrew Pudewa: Scott Newstok. It's a relatively new book. He's a professor of English at Rhodes College in Memphis. But this book, I think you would just relish it completely. He was on my podcast not long ago, in the show notes.

Julie Walker: Link in the show notes.

Andrew Pudewa: He talks about what was the curriculum of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, and it was pretty much just Latin, Greek, grammar, rhetoric, disputation, lots of being steeped in the classics.

And all of that together created kind of the soil from which the very unique seed of Shakespeare could sprout and grow into this mighty oak lasting hundreds of years. But other people were educated in that same way. So I think we want to be very careful that we don't lose those fundamentals of being able to collect up, organize, present, reflect, analyze on ideas in favor of flashy stuff that isn't actually affecting cognitive development in the same way.

Julie Walker: I'm just going to add a little bit to this, Nicki, and specifically about grammar, and that is something that, as you mentioned, we've got our *Fix It! Grammar* program, but you'll notice there's only six years of *Fix It! Grammar*. Only six levels, but we start very, very basic: noun. What is a noun? And we go on. It's all the way up to, if students are going through level six of *Fix It! Grammar*.

Andrew Pudewa: What do I say? They know more grammar than 99.9999999% of all English speaking people on earth. The other thing I like to mention is that grammar is not really a science in that here's a set of information and you can learn it all and know it all and spit it all out. Grammar is an art, and language changes over time.

And so again, kind of like music, how much do you need to know? Well, there's no answer to that question. You could study grammar your entire life if you were called to that type of thing. I don't think most of us are, but it certainly is nice to have mastery of something, whether it's an art like music or a sport or dance or understanding the structure of the language you speak.

Nicki Truesdell: Yes. I usually tell my readers that it doesn't matter what your child intends to do after graduation. They should all be able to communicate well.

Julie Walker: Yes. That's so true.

Nicki Truesdell: Whether they go on and become a teacher or a journalist or a stay at home mom, they still need to know how to communicate properly because everyone's going to communicate.

Andrew Pudewa: Right. And let's say you've got a kid who says, well, I'm going to be an engineer. I'm going to be a software engineer. I'm going to be IT. I'm not going to need that skill. Well, if you're an engineer and you're a good engineer, you remain an engineer because you're good at it. But if you're a good engineer who can also communicate engineering ideas, then you rise up in positions of influence and leadership. And if our kids are called to that, then we need to have them well equipped for that purpose as well.

Julie Walker: I have to give one more plug to *Fix It!*.

Andrew Pudewa: Okay.

Julie Walker: And this is, Nicki, my goodness, when you say that you were homeschooled in the 80s, I was homeschooling in the 80s. You could be my daughter?! That's crazy. But we didn't, we didn't have fix it grammar at that time in the 80s when I started homeschooling my kids.

And so we used another unmentioned grammar program, and it did not translate into their writing. And that's one thing that we love about *Fix It!* is over and over again, it, we hear that it translates into their writing, and so that would be the argument for considering doing it both at the same time. So that they can apply what they've learned in *Fix It!* to their writing assignments.

So great question. Thank you so much for being an affiliate

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah. Thanks for joining us today. Hopefully we'll meet up on the convention circuit at some point.

Nicki Truesdell: Actually, we will; we're going to meet up in Oklahoma next month.

Julie Walker: Oh, that's awesome. That's great. Yeah. She's from Texas. She hails from Texas and Nicki has written a book, *Anyone Can Homeschool*. I love that title. We talk about that anyway, and sometimes, and one of our questions was. How do I do what it is you want me to do if my kids are in school? And so sometimes we will say, everyone homeschools, just some of us do it full time.

Because parents who want to be involved in their parents' [children's] education, they're going to be supplementing to a certain extent. And that's a real need too. Well, thank you. Thank you. Let me, let me get to some of the other questions, Andrew. They're all so good.

Andrew Pudewa: All right.

Julie Walker: Megan from Los Alamos, New Mexico. She says that she wants to teach introduction to public speaking to middle schoolers at her co-op, and they meet once a week. How do you recommend she schedule the time? Do you think it'd be possible to finish the course in 12 weeks as written, or does she need a little bit more extra time?

Andrew Pudewa: Well, my, my experience with co-ops and groups like that is that the periods are generally fairly short, 45 to 60 minutes. And our videos are longer than that. So one option would be have the kids watch the video at home, and then you've got all that class time to answer questions, talk about it, and let the kids give speeches to each other. I think that would be one good way to do it, but you would have the problem of some kids not watching it at home and then showing up anyway.

Another option is that she could watch it herself and then try to re-present that in a somewhat abbreviated fashion. Be me. Steal the jokes, I don't mind, and try to squeeze it into that time period, but you're still going to have a limited amount of time for kids to give speeches to each other.

I would think that a semester in a co-op might be more than 12 weeks. So if the semester would last out more like 15 or up to 18 weeks, then I think you'd have some leeway and breathing room in there. The last thing is you could show clips of it to the kids in class and fill in the rest yourself so that you could do it.

Otherwise, just get more time, stretch it out over a year, that's possible, and you could watch the video in class and then you have the next class would be working on speeches and giving speeches and critiquing speeches. If you got a group of kids, the time frame is also going to depend on how many because you're going to have to give everyone a chance to do a speech now and then, otherwise, what's the point?

Julie Walker: Yeah, when we made the video, we allowed lots of students to give speeches and we picked the best.

Andrew Pudewa: We didn't put them all.

Julie Walker: But that's really the best way to teach this course is to give as many students as possible an opportunity to speak. If they don't speak, they're not going to learn. This is a speaking thing.

Andrew Pudewa: Okay, well hopefully that answered her question. I don't know.

Julie Walker: Okay. Cita from Falls Church, Virginia. Oh, I guess we don't need these anymore, do we? She wants to know if we have any tips for writing college essays.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah, well, the quick tip is we have a course to help you with that.

Julie Walker: Yes. As a matter of fact we do.

Andrew Pudewa: And it includes the understanding of basic outlining, key word outline, and then the kind of key word on steroids approach to outlining, which is the advanced note taking system. We have some really good analysis tools, the TRIAC paragraph, the division comparison analysis synthesis, approach. We have some tips on MLA and APA format. And a few other things.

One of the things I would always say to a kid though is when you go off to college or university and you take a class, you have to write a paper, try and do a little research and figure out what that teacher likes. Ways to do this would be to see if that teacher has published anything; read what that teacher has published, maybe it's a journal article, or maybe something you can find online or a blog or whatever, and spy on that teacher's writing style. Figure out kind of what they do and then try to make your paper in that style. And then semi-subconsciously, the person reading it will say, well, this is good. So we have some tips on how to do that.

And the way to practice that would be some author imitation ideas. What you would discover is that not all teachers have the same attitude about certain things in writing. Some teachers may actually like short sentences, simpler words, get to the point, and don't make me stay up late. And then other teachers might appreciate a more advanced vocabulary, more complex thought, and more development. So you kind of have to figure out what they want.

So I always say to kids, if you go to college, don't try to write well. Try to figure out what the teacher thinks is good writing and do that. Be able and willing to change the way you write for different teachers. So, that's, that's one thing we try to help out with in that *University-ready Writing*. But it's a good course. We've had it out for a while now and have had some really spectacular testimonials that “yes, we only found this late and it was my high school senior and we didn't even know about IEW till now and this totally prepared him.”

Julie Walker: Well, and that's a really good point. This course is designed to be helpful both for students who know IEW or for students who have never even experienced dress ups or sentence openers or any of that. We do introduce some style, but mostly it's talking about essays and getting them ready. Just as the title says. We're hoping that some universities will actually use this as their curriculum in their writing labs.

Andrew Pudewa: That would be good. Yeah.

Julie Walker: Another question. This is from a homeschool teacher from McKinney, Texas.

Andrew Pudewa: Okay. Dallas.

Julie Walker: Kind of right in our neighborhood almost. She has a dyslexic 7th grade, 13 year old, and she has been doing *Structure and Style* for two years and has been the scribe. And she wants to know, if she should continue doing this. His writing has improved tremendously. We love hearing that. He's in his dyslexia program. However, I'm wondering if you recommend a voice to text program for his assignments, or should I just continue being the scribe? And it will click as we continue this journey. Seventh grade.

Andrew Pudewa: I would ask, if she were here right now, has he been doing any just straight copy work? Because even the dyslexic, dysgraphic kids can buckle down and do that, especially around the age of 11, 12, 13, where presumably, that burst of power is coming into their lives, and so I'm going to assume that, yes, this student has been doing some copy work, maybe 10-15 minutes each day.

And so then the next step in this process is he does an IEW assignment, he dictates to you, and you write it down, I would recommend, on a large whiteboard. So that he sees what he's saying going into text on a large whiteboard. and he can see and read what he just said. That's a lot better than you typing it and he's just dictating or you writing on paper and he may or may not be able to even to read your handwriting.

Then the next step is to have him copy on paper what he dictated and can see on the whiteboard. Now, if that's not possible, if the dysgraphia is so bad that he can't write on paper at all, then, of course, you would look at technologies to accommodate that difficulty.

And there's some value in voice to text, but the danger is that people start talking the way they talk, and that becomes writing the way they talk. And most people today talk so carelessly and informally, that when it comes out in text, isn't really the way it would come out if you were pausing to think carefully about each sentence.

Now maybe she's been doing this for two years, and so this child has the ability to as if he were writing, using the better vocabulary, using complete sentences, avoiding saying was like, and like, and you know, and cuz, and stuff, and, and those verbal crutch fillers, then that would be fine, and, and there's nothing wrong with dictating.

Milton dictated *Paradise Lost*, because he couldn't see to write anymore, to two daughters. He kept them both busy at the same time. G. A. Henty dictated most of his novels while he was traveling around the world, also dictating news reports from other countries as an international correspondent. So, there's no, there's no absolute impediment to dictation being a very good way to write.

The key would be to sort the difference between "I'm talking the way I talk" versus "I'm talking the way I would write." Does that make sense?

Julie Walker: Yes, it does. I sent a text message to a friend, and I use voice oftentimes when I text, and I said, *want to*.

Andrew Pudewa: Instead of *wanna*?

Julie Walker: No, it translated it for me to be *wanna*, and I hit send, and I was embarrassed.

Andrew Pudewa: You said want to and it autocorrected to *wanna*?

Julie Walker: Do you *wanna* do that?

Andrew Pudewa: That's weird.

Julie Walker: That was very sad. Okay, I have another question for you. This is from Laura, and she's from Ontario, Canada.

Andrew Pudewa: Oh, Canada.

Julie Walker: Not to be confused with Ontario, California.

Andrew Pudewa: Canadians would never do that.

Julie Walker: Yes, they would never do that, but Californians

Andrew Pudewa: They might not even know there is an Ontario, California.

Julie Walker: Yes.

Andrew Pudewa: What's the question?

Julie Walker: The question is, about what reading level should my nine year old be in order to start *Fix It!* book one?

Andrew Pudewa: Able to read with help. I don't think you have to be at any particular level of independence in reading. I think our *Fix It!* book one is written at about a grade four reading level, plus maybe a little higher just because we have the vocabulary words embedded in. So the vocabulary is part of the learning process in the Fix It.

So I would say able to read somewhat independently, and then you can do it with them and read it, and it'll reinforce everything. It'll reinforce reading, reinforce spelling, and obviously reinforce some of the mechanics that are being taught in book one.

Julie Walker: And there's a copywork element in it as you rewrite it. So

Andrew Pudewa: After you fix it, you have to copy it.

Julie Walker: You have to copy it.

Andrew Pudewa: That's going to be also good for a nine year old who's maybe not super strong reading.

Julie Walker: Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

Andrew Pudewa: I always just say I think one thing that anyone could do on the Fix It! is go to the free lessons. And is it [IEW.com/free-lessons?](http://IEW.com/free-lessons/)

Julie Walker: Well, yes.

Andrew Pudewa: Or free-grammar?

Julie Walker: It is actually, yes,

Andrew Pudewa: Anyway, you'll put a link in the show notes.

Julie Walker: Link in the show notes.

Andrew Pudewa: But you can download the first few weeks of the *Fix It!* level and try it out. And see if it's going well. And if the first few days or a couple of weeks goes well, then you can go with confidence. If you're really bogged down and there's tears and frustration because it's just impossible, then wait a year.

Julie Walker: Oh, yeah, definitely. Yeah, we want *Fix It!* to be fun, as fun as grammar can be or even more fun than grammar can be. Okay, so Caroline's from Wilmette, Illinois. She said, she is identifying herself as a homeschool teacher, but you'll love this question. "My son is in middle school, and I'm a full time working mom."

Andrew Pudewa: Okay.

Julie Walker: "When I asked about good ELA program recommendations, I've heard great things about IEW [which I love hearing that] from trusted homeschool families. But I would like to know how much parent involvement is required for the success of the program?" and this is why she qualifies it. "Will it be too much for the student if they also go to school full time?" So this is basically you're an after school homeschool mom.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah. Well, I think we would agree on this—the SSS course is the best option because the parent doesn't really have to know everything before it's being taught. Ideally, you would watch it with the student, but even then, it's not absolutely necessary. Of course, how old was this child, do we know?

Julie Walker: Middle school.

Andrew Pudewa: Middle school. So he could probably do it on his own. I think that the student would benefit from going a little bit more slowly so that it doesn't become a big added burden of homework on top of already being in school. The upside is that these are going to, the things that this child will learn—the key word outlines, the story sequence chart, the topic literature paragraph, the dress ups and openers—all of that, it's going to be like secret weapons that, No one else in his school is likely to have, and so he's gonna feel like, "Yeah, I really write pretty well." And the teacher may even comment and say, "Wow, you write really well. How did you learn this?"

So, I think it's definitely worth trying to squeeze into life. If you just say, "here, go do this on your own, goodbye." I don't know if that'll be as effective as saying, "Hey, let's do this

together.” But feel free to take two years to do a course. There's no rule that says you have to go through all 24 weeks in 24 weeks. I don't think anybody does that. And the other thing would be, ideally you would take some time to edit the paper for each composition for this child so that the child can then see the edits and copy it over with the text edits and learn the process of improving it from a rough draft to a final draft. So there'd be some time involved there, but it would be well worth it. Time well spent.

Julie Walker: Yes, I think so too. And the other thing that I can offer to you is we have a whole list of accredited instructors. People who have gone through the IEW program who would be willing for a fee to evaluate your student's paper, especially if they're going through SSS. Some of these *Structure and Style for Students*, the video course, link in the show notes, that Andrew's recommending.

If you, yes, absolutely edit the paper, but if your son wants to turn it into someone, we have a list of accredited instructors who might be willing to evaluate the paper. And that would be, especially those middle school years, it's kind of nice to get someone other than mom giving you some input.

Okay, I'm going to go ahead and answer this question for you, unless you want to chime in.

Andrew Pudewa: Go ahead.

Julie Walker: This is from Megan. She's from Menifee, California. And she has some questions about PAL. PAL is our *Primary Arts of Language* materials for basically teaching your primary age students how to read and write.

Andrew Pudewa: Beginning reading, beginning writing.

Julie Walker: And she's overwhelmed because there are a lot of different pieces in that package. And so my recommendation to you, Megan, is there is a DVD ROM. So find a DVD player. Put that in first for the reading. So it's got a little boy on the cover and he's, Thanks Megan. He's doing, it's a little boy. The little boy is where you start. Put that in. That has some instructions for you, the teacher, of how to get started. If you start there, that's what you're going to want to do.

And then the second advice I'd give you to get started. You were given the [Primary Arts of Language Phonetic] games book. So we've got a couple dozen games in there and you need to put those together on file folders. So you get a box of file folders and cut out the pieces. Get your older students. If you don't have any older kids, get your husband, the two of you sit down, and just make all the games at the beginning.

So, make all the games. Watch the DVD ROM, for the reading part. it. And that should give you a leg up to be able to get started with our program. It does require some...teaching a child to read is no small undertaking.

Andrew Pudewa: We really should put that video online because so many people can't find a DVD player anymore.

Julie Walker: I think if our customer service team were here, they would say, oh yeah, it's online. Link in the show notes.

Andrew Pudewa: We'll, we'll check and see.

Julie Walker: Another question, this has to do with spelling. “So this is my first time using IEW curriculum. In the sample three weeks, the schedule doesn't include any spelling component.” What do you recommend for teaching spelling while using our writing program?

Andrew Pudewa: Well, that would depend on the age of the student and their spelling mastery and maybe even whether they're more auditory or visual. There are many good spelling programs. We recommend *All About Spelling Level 1* for beginning spelling. Basically, sound out-able three and four letter words, essentially.

Julie Walker: She's got students doing 1A and 1B, a little bit older.

Andrew Pudewa: yeah, so, you could try our spelling program, again, it's free lessons, you can check it out, three lessons? And it's an auditory input, self test, self correct approach. We taught all our kids spelling with *Spelling Power* which is still around. So I don't know enough about this family, but we don't really have spelling as a component of the *Structure and Style for Students* course because then it would just be really bloated and it wouldn't be what it's supposed to be.

So,

Julie Walker: And also, I want to recommend your talk, Andrew, *Spelling and the Brain*

Andrew Pudewa: yeah, *Spelling and the Brain*

Julie Walker: Because you talk about how writing and spelling, they're basically different sides of your brain.

Andrew Pudewa: Right.

Julie Walker: So we don't necessarily want to teach that.

Andrew Pudewa: we don't want to pester kids about spelling everything correctly the first time if what we're asking them to do is put words into sentences that make sense and sentences into a logical order. So, we do have a spelling program. I think it is different in some very significant and valuable ways.

But it certainly is not the only option.

Julie Walker: Yeah, great. Okay, so Phonetic Zoo is in the link in the show notes. And that could be an option, but it might be—we stopped teaching spelling in my own homeschooling program when my kids got into middle school, because they were pretty good spellers.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah. The other thing I would reiterate, and I've been thinking about this a lot, even since we made Structure and Style, but the power of copywork to create an attention to detail and even to help with spelling. In fact, I think when copywork was kind of a norm for first, second, third grade kids in schools, they learned to spell a lot through just copy work every day. And as that got eliminated from schools, they had to kind of replace it with all these worksheets and workbooks and things that I'm not sure they are anymore and they're possibly less effective.

So, I think especially for a Level A student, in addition to doing the instruction style video, 15 minutes a day of copying, whatever you like, scripture, poetry, great literature, jokes, whatever. But when you copy a word, and you copy a sentence, you're having to attend to, pay attention to the spelling of those words. So it's just a little daily exercise that builds those spelling synapses.

Julie Walker: Yep. Yep. And that curriculum would be pretty inexpensive too.

Andrew Pudewa: Paper is what you need.

Julie Walker: and a library card.

Andrew Pudewa: Actually, you wouldn't even need paper if you did it like they used to 150 years ago on a slate.

Julie Walker: Okay. Another question from Rhonda. She's from El Cajon. We have a lot of Californians. I just got back from California visiting there. Andrew and I both hail from California. “Is sentence diagramming a must or at least very useful?”

Andrew Pudewa: That would probably depend on who you're listening to because some people might say, yes, absolutely. And other people might say, No, not at all. There's certainly value in sentence diagramming. People will ask me, Why don't you teach

Julie Walker: We don't teach it in *Fix It!*

Andrew Pudewa: And my answer is that while it is useful, it also can be frustrating in that, grammar, as I said earlier, it's not a science. There's not always an exactly correct answer to everything. And you could study sentence diagramming for years, and I could throw you a five-word sentence that would defy being diagrammed consistently in the same way by everybody, even experts. So that's part of the problem. It's just, it's a fuzzy thing.

But I know people who learned it and are profoundly grateful because it gives you a big sense of the structure. In terms of *Fix It!*, we focus more on the application side, the applied side, which is, What are the problems and how would you make this good or legal?

If you really want to understand the deep logic of language itself, diagramming brings you in that direction, but the best way to go, I think, the limousine way to go, is Latin. And study Latin, and then you really learn all of the substructures and the labels and the relationships between what all those parts of language are. And the rules that govern their behavior. And there's a lot more rules in Latin than there are in English. So if you learn Latin, it's probably the very best way to improve your understanding of English grammar.

But I don't know there's a lot of proof or evidence to show that sentence diagramming actually improves usage of English as much as say translating from a foreign language into English and learning it that way. So, I'm always saying to people, if you have the bandwidth and you're willing to undertake it, go learn Latin with your kids. You can start as young as nine or ten years old, plan to do it for at least six years. And the goal isn't to chat in Latin, the goal is to learn to read and understand and translate and kind of bring into your soul in a way, the deep logic of language itself. And whatever you learn in Latin will be transferable to any other language you ever study.

In fact, I was thinking we think of Latin, oh Spanish, yes, Italian, yes, French, a little bit, but you know what? Japanese. If you wanted to learn Japanese and you had studied Latin for several years, you would get Japanese grammar a lot quicker. It would all make very good sense. And there's some even similarities between Japanese and Latin, like the verb coming at the end of a sentence and stuff like that. So I would say if you possibly are brave enough, do Latin and don't worry so much about sentence diagramming, and it would be probably a gain, a net gain.

Julie Walker: One thing that we are constantly asking ourselves here at IEW and on my team in particular, probably everyone, is this the best use of your time?

Andrew Pudewa: Always is the question.

Julie Walker: And if you're not asking that question, then you should be. Is this the best use of your time?

Andrew Pudewa: Well, and adjunct with this is, is this causing or likely to cause excessive frustration? I mean, you can be a little annoyed at having to do something, and that's okay. But if you open that book and you just are always overwhelmed, frustrated, and confused, well, pretty soon you're just not going to want to ever open that book again. And then life becomes about how do you avoid ever having to do that. And if I meet a 12 year old kid who says, "I hate English grammar." that only means "I've been taught badly." Right. And that can be fixed.

Julie Walker: Yeah. Ha, ha, ha. Pun intended. Maybe

Andrew Pudewa: Oh yeah. I didn't even think of that. It can be fixed. We should do something like that.

Julie Walker: do something like that. We can fix that. I learned to diagram sentences as an adult, and I enjoyed it very much because it was a puzzle. It was, but I wasn't required to do it, so maybe that's the right time to learn diagramming as an adult.

Andrew Pudewa: I once saw a diagram of the first sentence of the Declaration of Independence, which is 72 words long. It was amusing. But I did think, oh, there's more than one way you could do that. But I'm not an expert, so I'm not going to challenge it

Julie Walker: Okay. This is a fun question. This is from Leah from Illinois, Mattoon, Illinois. She's a retired homeschool mom. I'm going to change your title. You are homeschool mom emeritus. Yes. That's it. That sounds much more fancy. "I'm a retired homeschool mom whose children are thriving in college, but I cannot get IEW out of my mind. I love everything about IEW and plan on doing the teacher training again this summer, (which is so awesome.) My problem is I don't want to know what I'm going to do with it. I have never taught anyone besides my own children. What advice or support can you give as I move forward as an empty nester wanting to make an impact in this world using IEW."

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah, start a cottage school. Just find half a dozen kids, and if your grandchildren aren't there yet or old enough, then find somebody else's kids. Offer. Say, "Hey, I'm gonna teach a writing class using IEW, it'll be two hours, pick your day and time," and put the word out. And I would, I'd bet pretty good money that you can get as many students as you'd want in a group. And just try one little group, six kids, eight kids. And use one of our programs, either a video course where you can watch me and then re-teach it live to the kids, or one of the, one of the theme-based writing lesson books. People are doing this all over the place. And, the fact that you want to go through that certification process again indicates that you'll be well qualified.

So there's a great need. A lot of parents are now homeschooling not because it's the most exciting thing they can think of to do with their life. They're homeschooling because there aren't very many other good options, or no other good options, and they are looking for help.

They're looking for people like you to say, "Hey, I'll teach writing. Hey, I'll tutor reading kids. Hey, I'll do a science workshop, or, Hey, we'll do a book club." And giving that external accountability for their children is a real service. And if you taught your own kids for years, don't worry, you'll be just fine teaching other people's children. In fact, you may find it a little bit easier to teach other people's children because you don't have that kind of emotional challenge that can rise up when you're interacting with your own kids. I actually think I'm a nicer teacher when I'm teaching other people's children than I was when I was teaching my own because I didn't have any anxiety about other people's kids.

"I'll just teach you. We'll see what we learn and, and go there." Whereas if it's my kids like, what? "What do you mean you can't get it? Just do it. Just like what's your problem?" And I don't want, I don't want that to creep in. So I think you'll have a great time and let us know what we can do to support you in that in any way.

Can, can we answer Cindy's question real quick there?

Julie Walker: What IEW program, go ahead, why don't you

Andrew Pudewa: What IEW program would help a 14 year old who is unable to put his thoughts onto paper and help to form sentences? Auditory processing issues makes this, hope this makes sense. I would say. Go with the SSS-1A for a child, even though he's 14, you'd know. Download the free lessons and try it out.

When I hear that type of comment, the flag for me is “put his thoughts onto paper.” And that's the problem of overwhelm. “I have to find an idea. I have to mentally speak it into existence. I have to hold that idea in my mind long enough to then go wrestle the technical information of how to make letters and spell words and write sentences. And get that down, and then go to the next idea in a sequence, but I forgot everything,” and there's a breakdown. That's why with our approach, Cindy, you would find, if you haven't learned this already about how we do things, is we don't ask students to begin by putting their own thoughts on paper. We give them the thoughts and ask them to reconstruct those thoughts in a process involving outlines, telling it back, and then putting it on paper. So, we take that hugely complex thing called “putting your thoughts on paper” and break it into very small steps and teach it in small steps over a longer period of time and that's why we have such good results with kids who are overwhelmed by the process either because of diagnosed issues or just hate doing it because they never know what to do.

So, I'd say give that a shot if you can, Cindy. Try to watch our *Teaching Writing: Structure, and Style* seminar in preparation or in conjunction with using the SSS course because the more you understand it, the more you're going to be able to assist with every little step along the way. And, anywhere you are into that, we've got people on our team who have a lot of experience with kids who have spectrum and auditory processing and/or dyslexia, dysgraphia issues.

Julie Walker: I have one thing that's not a question, but I just want to read it because it's so nice.

Andrew Pudewa: okay. Well, let's hear it then.

Julie Walker: So, and she's from Australia.

Andrew Pudewa: Australia. Great.

Julie Walker: Melissa says, “I want to let Andrew know how much my children love watching him. They have been homeschooled all the way through and are now 13 and 15. We are currently completing Introduction to Public Speaking and have thoroughly enjoyed it so much, oh, so much so that my children keep asking me, Mom, is there a follow up course?”

I guess that is a question, right? So my question is, will there be a follow up course to public speaking?

Andrew Pudewa: Well, we don't have anything like that right now, but I know that the NCFCA, they have some guides to speech and debate events, and if you wanted to start a debate club

Julie Walker: In Australia

Andrew Pudewa: with your kids and other people's kids, I would refer you to the NCFCA that has materials to teach how to do that. The other thing is, don't we have that speech contest?

Julie Walker: We do have a speech contest.

Andrew Pudewa: Where people can write a speech and practice it up and then deliver it and send us a video and win prizes.

Julie Walker: Yes, and so just be sure that you're on our email list because we have a speech contest that's coming up in the fall. And basically you're sending in a video of your students giving their

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah,

Julie Walker: One take shot.

Andrew Pudewa: yeah, so that'd be one way to up the ante a little bit.

Julie Walker: Cash prizes for the kids and little, incentive for parents and teachers as well.

Well, we've already gone over.

This has been so good. So thank you all of you for joining us today. Thank you for your excellent questions. As Andrew mentioned, we have an amazing customer service team and they are able to answer almost any or every question that comes at them. And if they don't know the answer, we just keep kicking it up the food chain all the way up to you, Andrew.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah, well, very rarely are you unable to answer the questions.

Julie Walker: Well, we've been around for a long time, so, well, thank you, Andrew.

Andrew Pudewa: Sure, this was fun. Thank you all.

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. 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.