
SPEECH AND RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Course: Communication and Rhetoric

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Speech

Good students, teachers, parents, and distinguished guests, my name is Eleri Edwards and I am honoured to stand before you as a past Gap High student, to tell you about my experiences after finishing high school. This ceremony, here, tonight, represents the culmination of twelve years hard work. It has been a difficult journey for you. Especially this last year with assignments, QCS exams, and the end of a stable life. I remember the excitement of true freedom, the sadness in saying goodbye to friends and classmates, and the anxiety of stepping out into the world beyond these walls. 5 years ago I was sitting where you were now, seventh row from the front, second seat inwards on the left. I was one of the lucky ones. I knew what career I wanted and I knew what path I wanted to take to get there; to get a job writing creative software in the IT industry I needed to go to university.

But what about those students who didn't know what they wanted to do? As children we are asked the question, "What do you want to be when you're older?" I always used to answer, "I want to be a lion tamer". That never seemed to be an acceptable answer, for some reason. Why couldn't I be a lion tamer? It's a real job and my mother always told me to do something I'm passionate about. But they put expectations on what your answer should be. You should answer with a career that's successful, that is practical, and that contributes to society. I found an acceptable answer as I grew up: now I write about lion tamers in my spare time. Many of you don't have an answer to that question yet, and when you were younger that was ok, you still had time. But now you're graduating, society is waiting for your answer.

The world needs all types of people, from business managers to physicists, from plumbers to orthodontists, educators, ski instructors, and yes, even lion tamers. Not every career can be found by going to TAFE or university. Not every career can be found in here in Brisbane or even Australia. You have the power of choice. The option of choosing what you want to do and how you want to live your life. What is success? Money? Job stability? Happiness? It's whatever you choose it to be, whatever you work to achieve. I know teachers and parents will say that you're more likely to succeed with a university degree. This is true in the sense that it proves you can dedicate yourself to a goal and stick with it, even when the coursework is boring or seemingly unrelated. But the accumulation of life experiences will eventually get you to the same goals.

For my friend Angela, her passion is to travel the world, to meet new people and experience different cultures. Angela has been to every continent on the planet except for Antarctica, though she tells me she's working on it. Success requires making a goal and working towards it. Angela is 21, has little money, and has done most of her travelling while studying a 4 year Business degree at university. By taking advantage of every opportunity, using her savings, student exchanges, scholarships, and working a café job alongside her study, Angela is living the life she is passionate about. Her travel experiences have given her strong communication skills, an ability to work and get along in foreign cultures, and how to pack lightly. Combined with

her business knowledge, these skills gave Angela job opportunities that support the career she wants to live.

What do you want to be when you grow up? Many people never will never have a satisfactory answer to this question. For you, graduating students of the Gap High, now is a time pick a goal, whether towards a known career or not. Some goals are easier than others, like choosing to continue into tertiary education, while others will take a lifetime to master, like being financially independent. If it adds values to your person, it's worth doing: culturally, financially, physically, socially, or intellectually. The speakers from my ceremony were university students, who had their life mapped out for the next 20 years. I'm not that type of person. When I left high school my goal was small, to learn how IT can be used to create useful things. I am now a final year, student at the University of Queensland, studying IT and Arts. Yes, a girl studying IT, it's still not common. My goal has changed since I started my degree. It's expanded into many goals, some wider in focus and others narrower. I want to create useful, object-oriented software that serves an essential purpose. I want to make computers more accessible and relatable to the elderly. I want to create designs for 3D printing and build them myself. I want to take an active part in advancing the technology of today towards the technology of science fiction.

Learning is not limited to academic education. Many of you will go on to do tertiary study at a TAFE or university, and these will be highly worthwhile experiences. Others of you will follow other paths. Perhaps you will value success in terms of building strong relationships, playing sports, or experiencing travel over traditional job success. All these are valid and worthwhile pursuits. Tonight is the conclusion of your high school years. Before you is the choice of how you will take the first step into the rest of your life. Life is not easy or predestined and you may often step sideways or backwards from the path you first envisioned. But what I want you to take with you is the reminder that you are the connected generation. More than any other, you are not alone in your journey. With family and teachers and friends who support you, to the vast web of information at your fingertips. Choose your goals and let them lead you into a career of your choosing.

Rhetorical Analysis

The high school graduation is a major milestone in a student's life. I used a realist approach to balance the ceremonial and epideictic tense of the keynote address, to set up shared values with the audience. During an *inquisitive exordium*, I used ceremonial language (C1) and acknowledged the audience's values (C2) to build my *decorum*. I then added *kairos* by using an anecdote to shift the audience's mood (C3) from excitement to anxiety of the unknown future. This shift allowed me to use *practical wisdom* to show off my experience and further build up my authority, "I was one of the lucky ones".

With the end of school as the context in which this speech was made, the values of the audience as a whole would not be receptive to more learning, especially those students who would not be going on to tertiary education. Therefore, I finish the *exordium* with a rhetorical question (C4) that sets up a *division* between the two types of students, guided and unguided. I build on this with a *commonplace* and a *hypophora* (C5) to emphasise this divide. I engage the audience into accept this definition using facetious humour and a pathetic call to action (C6).

The *narratio* brings a change in stasis to *logos*. *Systrophe* (C7) is used to lead into *redefining* success (C8), reflecting the change in topic of the speech, from "what is there to learn after school?" to continuous learning through self-improvement. Due to the primarily pathetic nature of this address, the *confirmatio* uses *prolepsis* (C9) before leading into an *anecdote* (C10) support the *narratio* and keep the audience engaged.

The *refutatio* returns to *logos* with the use of *epanodos* (C11) to emphasise that no one person can dictate the paths of the students. This is intended to encourage the students and to acknowledge to the parents that my opinion belongs to an individual. The repetition in *systrophe* (C12) and *anaphora* (C13) build the *refutatio* towards the climactic *peroratio*. By summarising the previous points of the speech, reaffirming their graduation, and emphasising the future with *anadiplosis* (C14), the *peroratio* drives the audience's emotion towards a final call to action (C15).

In this address, I aimed to give the student audience a consideration of how they could measure their future success now they were no longer limited to the academic expectations of high school. By acknowledging the parents and the teachers in the *peroratio*, I supported my *decorum* both in using a ceremonial close, but by also emphasising their position as observing the success of the students. Overall, the keynote address established a strong ethos and pathos, while supporting the arguments made by logos. The realist tone was used to emphasise the shared values of the audience through the delivery in an address that is rhetorically epideictic.