

## Introduction

*This collection of exercises is designed to teach adults how to write an epideictic speech (a praise speech) for a community occasion.*

Even though school education may think the genre of epideictic speaking is inappropriate for children, it is a kind of public speaking that is very important for adults. Everyone at some time in their life has to speak at a wedding, funeral, birthday, prize giving, opening an event, or congratulating someone. These are all situations of praise.

More politically, epideictic speech is speech that calls a community to reaffirm itself and embrace its values more deeply and emotionally. It is a way of binding a community together more tightly. And it is my view that it is only *after this common ground of values has been laid out by epideictic rhetoric* that we can then start discussing policies and what should be done (deliberative rhetoric) in a hopeful constructive way.

According to tradition, there are three kinds of public speaking (rhetoric):

- Forensic rhetoric – legal argument over guilt or innocence in a court
- Deliberative rhetoric – debate about policy and legislation in parliaments
- Epideictic rhetoric – speeches of praise for community occasions

## Contents

The curriculum consists of 10 files.

- The first two files give an example each of a Speech of Praise
- The rest describe the Text Patterns needed to create a Speech of Praise
- I have added one on Metaphor/Simile as a bonus – it is not part of the speech

(To encourage you to copy, adapt, change and pass them on, I have deliberately used WORD for the files, and have not claimed intellectual property or copywrite.)

## Further Reading

There are many ways to begin reading about rhetoric. If you type ‘epideictic rhetoric’ into *Google*, you will find a *Wikipedia* page that is a good start.

Below are some of my own writings about how I have explored this kind of speech and why I think it is suited to adults, especially Indigenous adults. The four *Fine Print* articles are downloadable from the VALBEC website. Then Ngoonjook article is hard to get – email me if you really want it.

McCormack, R. 2005, Epideictic discourse: the rhetoric of memory, praise and hope, *Fine Print* vol. 28 no. 4, 13-16.

— — 2003, Common Units: politics and rhetoric, *Ngoonjook* 24, 25-33.

— — 2003, Adult Literacy: Towards a new paradigm, *Fine Print* vol 26, no. 4, 3-10.

— —. 2002, Revisiting the past: a rhetorical approach to language and literacy education, *Fine Print*, vol. 21, no. 1. 16-18.

— — 2002, Embracing the differences: a lateral approach to literacy, *Fine Print* vol. 21, no. 2, 24-26.

— — (unpublished) *Epideictic Rhetoric: Renewing vision, vibe and values* (included in this collection)

## Feedback

I would love to hear how you have used this, and especially value any eggs of student speeches. I am also happy to develop these kinds of exercises more, if there is a demand.

So feel free to email me at: robin.mccormack@vu.edu.au