

Public Speaking studies build confidence throughout study and employment

Public Speaking and Communication Licentiate Diploma Graduate, Jesse Matheson speaks with Emma Carpenter about his experience with Speech New Zealand and how it has influenced his role as an Assistant Research Fellow in the Sir John Walsh Research Institute at the University of Otago

Can you tell us about your work at the Sir John Walsh Research Institute?

I am an Assistant Research Fellow in the Sir John Walsh Research Institute at the University of Otago, conducting kaupapa Māori aligned research examining Māori perspectives of scanning and printing 3D plastic replicas of kōiwi tangata (human skeletal remains) as potential forensic evidence in court.

I work alongside Principal Investigator, Dr Angela Clark (Sir John Walsh Research Institute), Associate Investigators Samuel Carrington (Associate Dean Māori, and Department of Oral Sciences, Faculty of Dentistry), Jason Barr (Forensic Science Centre, ESR), and Heidi Baker (Māori Impact Group, ESR).

This project received funding from the Division of Health Sciences, and the University of Otago Research Grant 2022-2023.

How did you start with Speech New Zealand?

I always had an interest in the performing arts and a particular strength in public speaking. After moving from Queensland in 2014 Mrs Mary Flaherty and I settled on starting at Grade Seven Public Speaking and Communication.

I continued studying with Mrs Flaherty during university, completing Grade Seven (2014), Associates Diploma (Performance) (2015), and Licentiate Diploma (Teaching) (2020).

I was fortunate enough to be awarded the Grade 7 Public Speaking Scholarship and ASB Founders' Scholarship, with the latter allowing me to complete my Licentiate Diploma.

What further study have you completed?

Since finishing my Licentiate Diploma, I completed my studies at the University of Otago, officially graduating May 2022 with a *Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Applied Science (majoring in Forensic Analytical Science, with a minor in Criminology)*. My graduation was postponed twice due to COVID restrictions, it was an emotional reunion (in 2022) with my parents (from Queensland) after two and a half years!

I started working at the university full time in 2021 at *AskOtago | UiaŌtākou*, and moved into my current position as Assistant Research Fellow in April 2022.

I completed my Level 5 Diploma Te Reo Māori with Te Wānanga o Aotearoa.

What was your experience of Speech NZ examinations / syllabi?

I really enjoyed the Speech NZ syllabi, particularly the relative flexibility to choose topics/people that interested me. The practical examination SNZ offer are incredible. The examiners create such a positive and relaxed space for students to do their best. I have never experienced an exam room atmosphere quite like Speech New Zealand.

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- Jesse Matheson

How has your experience with Speech NZ influenced or assisted you?

Speech New Zealand has helped me through high school, university, and into employment. I was able to complete presentations in schooling/university with little to no difficulty, had the ability to think on my feet when asked difficult questions at university (or work) without feeling flustered, and Speech NZ gave me the confidence to work in many customer facing roles during and after university (incl. tour guiding).

What advice would you have to others considering Speech NZ examinations?

Examiners want you to succeed, they want you to do well. So, when you walk into your exam, think about it more as a performance of your skills and demonstration of your knowledge of what you have learnt over the last six months/year/however long, rather than a test of what you do and don't know.

Any other comments or thoughts?

I would like to thank Speech New Zealand for providing a syllabus that really benefited me, and for the scholarships that supported me to continue further. I would like to thank Mrs Mary Flaherty for her dedication and advice (both inside and outside of the classroom), and my parents, Tui and Peter, for their on-going support throughout my time with Speech New Zealand and university.



Jesse Matheson graduation with a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Applied Science.

