

A Citation Pathway - A Conversation with Denise Kelley

Transcript of Podcast Episode 347

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.

Well, Andrew, today we get to talk about one of your favorite subjects.

Andrew Pudewa: Lunch?

Julie Walker: No. And I’m, of course, saying this tongue in cheek because I know that this is not something that you enjoy teaching. But we do teach it here at IEW, and that is documentation.

Andrew Pudewa: That’s not tongue in cheek; that’s a flat-out lie.

Julie Walker: No. I know you do not like teaching documentation, but there are reasons for that. There are reasons why it’s important and necessary. And I know you believe in the importance of it, but I think ... Well, I’ll just let you say it. What is your beef? Why don’t you like to teach MLA and other *Chicago Manual of Style* type ... ?

Andrew Pudewa: Well, one problem is it just seems to be constantly changing. Nobody likes it when the rules are just constantly changing. And then the second reason is there’s all these different systems. And, you know, a poor kid heading off to get a paper, submit a paper, or even a professional – it can take more time to figure out the formatting than it does to do the research. So it’s just unbalanced. And I think, you know, those would be the two bigger reasons. I think it’s inelegant mostly. And I don’t like inelegant things because they aren’t good.

Julie Walker: So let’s talk about the importance of documentation: not how to, but actually documenting your sources.

Andrew Pudewa: Well, sure. Everybody wants to know: if you say something, where did you get that information? I don’t really worry about it because I just say whatever I think. And then people can believe me or not. But you know, in the world of research and publishing and particularly the academic world, there’s this big push to, you know, be sure you have your sources.

And in this world where it seems harder and harder to discern what is true or real or genuine, there’s an even greater push to kind of prove that whatever you’re claiming is supported from at least one source if not many.

Julie Walker: Yes. So even though you have what my friend and I call a DRA, a dirty, rotten attitude, about documentation, I know that you honor it enough to include it in our materials. And because of your DRA, Andrew, I have brought in Denise Kelley, who is our senior product manager. And part of her job is to bring some sanity to our documentation pathway. And so I'm not going to say much more. I'm just going to turn it over to her and let the two of you have a conversation.

Andrew Pudewa: Well, and I like that documentation "pathway" because all too often, you know, kids kind of hit the wall. And they were, you know, a happy little, carefree twelve-year-old writing their little creative stories, and then bam, they get hit with full MLA all in one time. And that, you know, can be overwhelming, which is why we like the EZ+1 method for everything.

Denise Kelley: Yes, and I'm thankful that I'm here sharing the table with you, Andrew. And I agree with everything that you've said. I know that there is a reason and importance to citing in a paper, but I also realize that this can become a really stressful thing for students if it's not presented well. And that's why I'm very thankful with the way that you teach your classes so that it is presented at an easy level.

Everything isn't thrown on the student to start with. I even have in front of me one of our Level A books, where there's just a little bit introduced. It's not expected to be a full-blown this is a bibliography or a works cited that you could turn in in college because it's Level A. So that's what we're trying to do in our material is present a little bit at a time so that as the student moves through the process, it isn't as overwhelming when they get to high school. They're not seeing it for the first time.

Andrew Pudewa: All right. So what is our Level A starting point for, I assume, MLA?

Denise Kelley: Right. And we do we do use MLA with the IEW products. This is an interesting thing for myself as a homeschool mom. For twenty years before I started working for IEW, I didn't even know there was anything other than MLA. And so when my boys went to college, it was a little bit of a jarring moment to find out that there were other formats that they had to use depending on what school you're in.

But what I did find was all freshman English classes are going to be MLA. And that's usually, you know, one of the first classes that you're hit with when you go to college. So we're an English company, an English grammar, writing composition company. And so that's why we use MLA format for citation.

And I feel like if it's taught well, then there is an easier transition into something like APA, Chicago, or Turabian that you would get. For instance, my son Tommy had APA – criminal justice. And then Turabian – seminary. So it just seems like an easier adjustment to another one if you've come to see that it's really not that big a deal.

Andrew Pudewa: It's kind of like learning a foreign language, you know. Once you understand how languages work, then you can learn things about other languages. But for our listeners who

are blissfully unaware, would you unpack the initials and give a little bit of history on these systems? MLA stands for ...

Denise Kelley: MLA stands for Modern Language Association. And as you've said, it seems like the rules are changing constantly. And so even though we put the basics in our material, and we definitely try to, you know, be as cutting edge, up-to-date as possible, what you do find when you go from class to class is you need to find out what is being expected – not only in an *MLA Handbook* but also by the professor.

I just had a situation, talking to another instructor. And she had read paperwork from a freshman college professor who uses MLA. And yet there was a stipulation that if you were going to cite from Gutenberg Press, he did not want any Gutenberg Press information in the citation. And yet if you look at, you know, MLA format ... Well, like *Chicago Manual of Style* or there was another one that I had looked at – you were supposed to put the Gutenberg Press information in the citation.

Andrew Pudewa: *Gutenberg.org* is a website that basically has books that are in the public domain. So yes, you know, some cases you'd put the link to the website where you got the information.

Denise Kelley: Right. And this professor was saying just cite the book itself. And yet ...

Andrew Pudewa: As if you had a real paper copy of in front of you.

Denise Kelley: As if you had that book right there, right. So you have to find out, you know, what's expected.

Andrew Pudewa: And how about APA? That's another one that's used in colleges.

Denise Kelley: American Psychological Association (APA). And like I said, I don't really have knowledge of where all it is used, but I do know criminal justice students have to use APA.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah, well, you know, psychologists have been trying to take over the world for a long time, so you know, they got their foot in the game. And then Turabian and Chicago are very similar, and that's what old people like me grew up with. So I think everyone kind of gets attached to their way of doing things.

Denise Kelley: Yes. That's true.

Andrew Pudewa: I would prefer myself the Chicago, Turabian ... And Turabian is the last name of Kate Turabian, who kind of created the handbook that everyone used for a long time. And that is still used in like theology, I think some philosophy classes.

Denise Kelley: And that includes also things like footnotes. So there's differences in the way the paper itself is formatted.

Andrew Pudewa: Now the good news is there are websites that help you navigate all this stuff.

Denise Kelley: Yes, and that's what we encourage in the online class. Although we do teach how to do citation manually, we encourage that they use a citation generator. EasyBib is one that many, many of the students use. There's another one called Citation Machine. I don't really know that much about it, but there's quite a few out there now. And that makes, you know, the whole process less painful.

Andrew Pudewa: That helps with the formatting of the references or works-cited page. You're going to explain the difference there. But there are other things about MLA format that we start with. What do we have there in our Level A history-based writing lesson book?

Denise Kelley: Well, and this is as easy as knowing that you have, you know, inch margins on the page, that you would have the name, the lesson number, the date in the upper left-hand corner, the centered title, the double spacing. So the font is usually 12 point. So very basic. And then like I said, there's, you know ... Step by step by step, we move to, then, the next thing that they're going to learn so that it's not as overwhelming.

Andrew Pudewa: And those things you mentioned really take effect when a final paper is in a typed version. You know, you can approximate the semblance of that writing a notebook paper. But you don't worry about font size until you're choosing your font and your size on your computer to print it. So I like to see students who are facile with both formatting a handwritten paper properly, and then if they especially turn it in to some teacher that requires MLA, then they would have to follow those guidelines.

So that's basic formatting. And then, you know, where do we get to listing the references? I mean, our theme-based writing lesson books provide in almost every lesson all of the source texts. So there's no real reason to have a list of references when it's all just given to you. But Unit 6, maybe Unit 8, and some of them were saying go get your own sources.

Denise Kelley: Yes. And usually Unit 8 ... Unit 6, we're still supplying most of the source material. But Unit 8 – we're encouraging that they get their sources: library, online. And that's where we really teach the whole citation process at a high school level.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah. And in our SSS we also had to address this. I found it rather humorous that almost all the students believed they could get any information they needed just online. Like the idea of “go to the library, and look for a book on this subject” was not one that they immediately embraced. In fact, I think a couple times I had to require: one of your sources must be an actual book. Oh, what a burden on these poor children and their parents.

Denise Kelley: Yes, and I do think that's one of the reasons that it's important that we teach it the way that we do because they need to be prepared for if they go off to a college class, that they're ... You know, they're going to have teachers that are going to say you have to have, you know, the scholarly resources. You can't just go, you know, cite from somebody's blog that who knows if they were right or wrong or knew what they were talking about?

And so by us, again, making those stipulations for them, they're not going to be hit with that all at once like so many of us were, where the first paper that you wrote with these kind of requirements was when you hit a freshman English college class.

Andrew Pudewa: Right, so we're trying to get the feet in the water at least. Now a question I have been asked so many times ... In fact, just last week someone asked me, "So what is the difference between a bibliography and a works cited?"

Denise Kelley: Yes, and that's an interesting question because that's something that's changed within, I don't know, I think it's like the last five years. And there was, you know, a big stir as to what do you put at the top of the page? Do you put "Works Cited"? Do you put "Bibliography"? So you know, the easy way to look at it is if you're using MLA formatting, you have a works-cited page.

And "works cited" means even if you looked at forty different references to write the paper, if you are only citing ten of them, those are the ten that go on your works-cited page. A reference list is usually APA style. And then the bibliography is what you've already said is your favorite and my favorite as well; Chicago or Turabian would be the bibliography page.

And again, it depends on the teacher that you have. I mean, there are some teachers that would take off a lot of points. Other teachers might not even notice if you put the wrong thing at the top, but that's the difference. Bibliography for the Chicago or Turabian format is any book that you've looked at to write your paper. Works cited for MLA would be only the books that you've cited or the, you know, books, articles that you've cited in the paper.

Andrew Pudewa: Right. I had also heard that works cited were sources that you actually did quote or paraphrase. So there's a note, either an inline citation or some type of notation there. But a bibliography could be included as a list of books or sources that anyone might be interested in to follow up and learn more about this subject. Is that correct as well?

Denise Kelley: That sounds right to me. I feel like when I think bibliography, it's anything that you used to help you put that paper together. So of course, anything that you've cited is also in the bibliography. But if you're, you know ... If you're gotten some thoughts from a certain book that you've read, and you've, you know, it's all your own words, but still that's where you went to gain or glean that information ... Anything that you use to put the paper together would be on a bibliography. So, yes, I think what you're saying sounds right too.

Julie Walker: So, Denise, does that mean if you are doing MLA—I know, it's according to the professor—you include the works-cited page? Would you want to ... Can you also include a bibliography?

Denise Kelley: I would say that you would do whatever the professor is asking for. If he's asked only for a works-cited page, then you would give him only a works-cited page because no professor wants to look at more than what they asked for. So MLA: works cited unless they are giving you some kind of information in their own class where they want you to put bibliography at the top.

Andrew Pudewa: Of course, maybe ten years from now all of the kids will be so deeply steeped in the world of podcasts; they'll call it "show notes."

Denise Kelley: There we go. True.

Andrew Pudewa: One of my objections to the MLA and APA is this idea of inline citations. It's where you're happily reading along, and there's this jarring need to put parentheses and then, you know: (Shoemaker, 17) in parentheses. It's just so inelegant, I guess. I don't want that information right here. If I did want it, I would love just that tiny little ¹. And then I could go to footnotes or endnotes, and I could discover where it came from. But I mean, do we just have to live with it?

Denise Kelley: I guess we have to live with it. I agree with you. That's one of the reasons that I think Turabian is much more elegant. I also think it's easier to format because I've formatted all three over the years. But I guess if your name is Shoemaker, you might want to see your name in the middle of that text that other people are reading. Who knows? But yeah, I agree with you: Kind of jarring when you're reading along, and you know, you've got names and page numbers stuck in parentheses while you're reading the text.

Andrew Pudewa: I will say Dr. Webster abhors this, so you know ... But he retired decades ago. And of course, I remember the days when you used to have to do it on a typewriter. That was pretty painful because you had to somehow predict how much space you would need at the bottom of the page for your footnote. Computers have made our life easier in that way for sure.

What other resources are there available for parents, either that we provide or online that you're familiar with? Or maybe for, you know, kids – and they hit their first class in college. Or maybe even they want to submit an article for publication somewhere. Probably magazine editors are going to be a little more helpful than college professors, but what resources do we recommend?

Denise Kelley: Well of course, with our own product we give all of the information that a student would need to be able to do the assignment that we're asking them to do. So in our own products we have that information built right in as student handouts. And so, you know, if you're in an IEW class, that's not going to be a problem.

Often it used to be that you would be told that you were supposed to buy the *MLA Handbook*. When you signed up for college classes, that would be on the list of books that was required. At least from what I have been seeing over the last couple of years, they're not even doing that anymore because, like you said, there's so many changes. And so you have to keep buying that handbook and throwing out the one that you have.

And I think probably people are so used to looking for things like this online; it's very easy to get the information you want online just by doing a Google search for, you know, things that are current with MLA. The other thing is in the university or college for any particular school, they're going to provide their own resource. And so I've seen that, you know, more than once, that they actually have a place. It's already there. You just click on it, and it even gives, you know, samples. OWL Purdue is one of my favorite places to go online.

Andrew Pudewa: OWL stands for online writing lab, right, at Purdue University.

Denise Kelley: Yes. Purdue University. And they also have samples. So they don't just tell you what to do. They do what we love to do at IEW, and they model it. But I've seen that, you know, in the universities – that they actually will ... If you have a particular school that you're in, they will tell you exactly: this is what we're expecting from papers.

Andrew Pudewa: Yes. And there's minutia here that would be impossible to carry around in your head, like the difference between two authors and more than two authors, for example. Or a magazine that's published in paper versus that same magazine ... Could be the same exact article in the same exact magazine, but you got it online.

So you can't walk around with all this stuff in your brain, nor would you want to pollute your brain with all this stuff. So it's good that we have increasingly complex resources to solve increasingly complex, unnecessary problems.

Denise Kelley: Well, and just to know that you really don't need to stress over it. There's resources out there to help you, and you are not expected to know every period and comma. And it's not something you're expected to know off the top of your head.

Andrew Pudewa: But if you do know this, you can get a job working in the writing center of the university, coaching the less well-informed or flat-out totally ignorant students who have to write a paper and don't know the first place to begin.

Denise Kelley: That's true.

Andrew Pudewa: And it pays better than Chick-fil-A, I bet.

Denise Kelley: Probably.

Julie Walker: So we do get feedback about this type of documentation questions. And teachers and parents want to be sure their children are prepared for the real world, which in college is oftentimes citation. I really think the way we approach it is a very balanced approach. It's not what I like to call death by documentation. You know, we're not going to teach them everything because as you say, they can't possibly keep that all in their brain, nor is it necessary. But when it is necessary, "Oh, yeah. I remember doing this with my IEW class. Hmm. What is the professor recommending?" And I think that is the balanced way to look at all of this.

Andrew Pudewa: Of course.

Julie Walker: So I like the idea of a pathway. I like that we start them, you know, pretty early on ... not too soon, but soon enough where they are not jarred into figuring out how to do things and are learning to follow a style guide, are learning to follow a checklist. Because isn't that what documentation is? It's like here's a new advanced checklist where we're going to insert in the middle of a paragraph some parentheses and a author's name.

But if you have a citation with a lead-in, of course, you don't have to put the author because you said: "As Shoemaker states in his definitive work *Birds, Birds, and More Birds*": Open quote. And then all you have to put is a page number, right? Yeah. And I'm pretty sure, Andrew, I just quoted that from one of the *Structure and Style for Students*.

Andrew Pudewa: It sounds like something I would say. And there are details, like do you, you know, do inline? Do you make it inset? Is it integrated? There's so, so many variables there. But I think the key is, this is not worth being stressed about. And you teach it the best you can. And you inform your students: This will likely change in the not distant future. So relax.

Julie Walker: Exactly. And Denise, I'm so grateful we have someone like you on our team that's making sure it's not too hard. It's EZ+1 because that's what we do here at IEW. So thank you.

Andrew Pudewa: Thank you.

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, Google podcasts, 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.