

Reference Best Practices

Customer Service Necessities:

- Greeting patrons by making eye contact and engaging conversation:
“Hi, how can I help you?”
 - Library desks can be intimidating and question-asking stressful.
 - Make visiting the reference desk a good experience—be friendly!
- Ending the interaction
 - Ask questions about service:
“Was this useful to you?”
 - Encourage further library use:
“Let me give you the information for a subject librarian in your field.”

Reference Interviewing

- Not taking first questions at face value
 - What is being asked vs a librarian’s translation
- Supplementary questions to evaluate a patron’s needs
 - “What are you doing this research for?”
 - “Are you writing your paper through a particular lens?”

Patron Education

- Collaboratively question-answer
 - Demonstrate how to do research
 - Incorporate the patron throughout the process

Information Anxiety:

“A combination of library anxiety and information technology anxiety”
(Blundell & Lambert, “Information Anxiety from the Undergraduate Student Perspective)