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Jennifer L. Walz
Asbury University

Alison Jones
Carson-Newman University

Erin McCoy
Massasoit Community College

Amy C. Rice
Northwest Nazarene University

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Annotated Bibliography: The Reference Desk: Grand Idea or Gone Down the River?



**Jennifer L. Walz, Head of Research & Distance Services,
Asbury University**

**Alison Jones, Electronic Resources and Instruction Librarian,
Carson-Newman University**

**Erin McCoy, Reference and Instruction Librarian,
Massasoit Community College**

**Amy C. Rice, Library Director,
Northwest Nazarene University**

This bibliography is from a panel presentation at the 2017 ACL Conference. The goal of this panel was to explore different rationales or sets of values that illustrated the continuation of the reference desk and reference service as essential to the success of the academic community. We discovered that “what to do with reference” is far from a settled question. We discovered passionate arguments, diverse models, and an array of data. In this current stage of figuring out the value of academic libraries to the campus as a whole and to students in particular, it seemed that there was limited hard data connecting Reference services to how they met students’ needs. How do we make ourselves valuable, important, essential, and useful? Maybe we need to change our model? If so, how do we examine ourselves and our environment appropriately to make this happen? What factors should we examine? Which ones must we keep? What things can we discard or change?

When students come to seek assistance, they generally need the short, instant, and personal help, without having to attend a whole training session or class. Individual and personalized guidance for their immediate need is the most important factor for them. How do libraries provide that?

Aguilar, P., Keating, K., Schadl, S., & Van Reenen, J. (2011). Reference as outreach: Meeting users where they are. *Journal of Library Administration*, 51(4), 343-358. doi:10.1080/01930826.2011.556958

Librarians moved out into the departments on the University of New Mexico campus and experienced a higher level of interaction with faculty and students. They concentrated on true partnerships and mutual respect. When those were present, it changed their role on campus. There was a high level of engagement and contact - much of it virtual. They removed physical desks from the library. This requires many librarians and having subject specialties.

Alexander, L., Blumenthal, J., Downing, K., MacAdam, B., Rana, G. K., Reiman-Sendi, K., & Sutch, L. A. (2011). MLibrary: Concepts for redefining reference. *Journal of Library Administration*, 51(4), 326-342. doi:10.1080/01930826.2011.556957

This article outlines changes based on three major concepts: understanding and responding to user needs, aligning reference expertise with campus research agendas, and enhancing reference services with technology. Though they made changes, "what has not changed is the guiding philosophy that librarians partner as collaborators with library users of all types to promote academic, personal, and professional success" (p. 342).

Allison, D. (2015). Measuring the academic impact of libraries. *portal: Libraries & The Academy*, 15(1), 29-40. doi:10.1353/pla.2015.0001

"This study looked only at possible relationships between grade point averages and library use as defined through print checkouts and off-campus access to full-text resources" (p. 37). They did not look at other services in the library. Generally, the study discovered a correlation between greater use of the library and increases in GPA. However, they also wondered if the good students were already using the library, or does the library make them better students?

Arndt, T. S. (2010). Reference service without the desk. *Reference Services Review*, 38(1), 71-80. doi:10.1108/00907321011020734

This article is a case study. Initially, data was collected regarding reference desk usage, and anecdotal evidence regarding student confusion of multiple service desks was documented, along with evaluation of librarians duties and time split between reference, instruction, and liaison duties. At the start of the change the reference desk was left in place with a sign referring patrons to ask at the circulation desk, but soon they removed the reference desk. Marketing was a big part of the switch. Training circulation staff for effective referrals was also a key part of the process. Under the new model, librarians are still scheduled for reference shifts, but they work from their own offices. A flag identifying the office of the librarian on duty is also used. The new model was assessed after the first academic year, and they found an increase in "true reference encounters with librarians."

Bandyopadhyay, A., & Boyd-Byrnes, M. (2016). Is the need for mediated reference service in academic libraries fading away in the digital environment? *Reference Services Review*, 44(4), 596-626.

This paper clearly demonstrates the importance of human-mediated reference services in academic libraries. This article touches on the continued importance of the reference interview; students may begin with a simple question and realize it becomes more and more complex. It reinforces the need for skilled, knowledgeable professional librarians to provide effective and efficient reference services in a digital environment.

Banks, J., & Pracht, C. (2008). Reference desk staffing trends: A survey. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 48(1), 54-59.

Banks and Pracht provide a report of a survey done of librarians across the country to see if types of staffing at the reference desk had changed or was changing. The major result was that 62% of surveyed librarians stated that they used non-MLS personnel, which were considered to be more cost effective and freed up MLS personnel for other responsibilities. No specific strategy was identified to ensure that the patron received adequate and appropriate help. For the question about changes in librarians' duties, the main themes centered on spending more time on instruction, less time at the reference desk, and doing what was needed to keep up with the explosion of technology and resources.

Bickley, R., & Corral, S. (2011). Student perceptions of staff in the Information Commons: a survey at the University of Sheffield. *Reference Services Review*, 39(2), 223-243. doi:10.1108/00907321111135466

Bickley and Corral present the results of a questionnaire given to students that showed that most were unable to distinguish different groups of staff, were unaware of their departmental librarian and did not recognize the academic role of librarians. A small number were unwilling to ask for help because they see librarians and libraries as 'unapproachable.' When asked what librarians did, "a significant number [of respondents] believed that librarians carry out tasks performed by security, cleaning, or catering staff" (p. 234). The continuing failure of students to grasp the academic function of librarians is a serious concern.

Bicknell, T. (1994). Focusing on quality reference service. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 20(2), 77-81. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libraryscience/159/>

This is a seminal article on using other service industries to inform our practice and to meet user needs. Librarians should evaluate their service models, environment, behaviors and communication skills in order to discover how best to meet user needs. "If librarians get to know users' needs and expectations, they will be better

equipped to offer quality, efficient, cost-effective service with the funding and staff available” (p. 80).

Bishop, B. W., and J. A. Bartlett. (2012). Where do we go from here? Informing academic library staffing through reference transaction analysis. *College & Research Libraries* 74(5), 489-500.

In this analysis of reference transactions, this library determined where in the library a person needs to be visible in order to answer questions, as well as the training of staff to answer questions on the scale of “least complicated” to “most complicated.”

Bodemer, B. B. (2014). They can and they should: Undergraduates providing peer reference and instruction. *College & Research Libraries*, 75(2), 162-178.

There is a heavy emphasis on peer learning – students teaching other students – in higher education. The author’s question is, “Can this be done at the reference desk?” Some of his conclusions are a bit overstated and might not apply at other location, but he makes the case for using well-trained student workers. The training process is very important and requires heavy librarian involvement. He does acknowledge that more studies on the effectiveness of this approach need to be conducted.

Brenza, A., Kowalsky, M., & Brush, D. (2015). Perceptions of students working as library reference assistants at a university library. *Reference Services Review*, 43(4), 722-736. doi:10.1108/RSR-05-2015-0026

This article discusses the results of an informal survey done to see how student workers perceive the library. In cases where students had misperceptions, corrections were made to their training on the job. Also indicated was a strong requirement for consistency and clearly defined roles. This study did not examine the outcomes of student work or the quality of their work, but they realized not all librarians felt the students could answer any more than basic questions. They gave no real rationale for why they are using student workers at the reference desk.

Buss, S. P. (2016). Do we still need reference services in the age of Google and Wikipedia? *Reference Librarian*, 57(4), 265-271. doi:10.1080/02763877.2015.1134377

Traditional ready reference is in decline, but the need for broad-based research support will continue for the foreseeable future. As librarians adapt to the evolving research environment, libraries are experimenting with alternative models of reference services. Far-reaching calls to adopt one model or abandon another, such as the traditional reference desk, are off target given that each library must adapt to its own local situation and determine how best to serve its constituents. “Thus, when we account for the totality of modern reference services and the complex nature of users’ information needs, it becomes evident that reference is as vital today as it ever

was in preceding generations” (p. 266). “Librarians can and should discuss the merits of specific incarnations of the [desk], but the niceties are of little importance against the larger goal of ensuring that reference services meet our users’ needs” (p. 270).

Carey, J., & Pathak, A. (2017). Reference Mode Preferences of Community College (Two-Year) and Four-Year College Students: A Comparison Study. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 12(1), 50-71. doi:10.18438/B8VW40

In a broad survey across the entire City University of New York system (includes 2-year and 4-year college students) students overwhelmingly prefer face-to-face help with research assignments, which creates a strong case for keeping some form of personal reference service in the library.

Carlson, S. (2007, April 20). Are reference desks dying out?. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, A37-A39.

This is an early article on the topic which references the use of multi-modal interactions, like texting and chat where the librarian can be removed from the desk or even campus, and still handle the questions. The author mentions Steven Bell who says that the reference desk will die out by 2012! There is an overemphasis on technology to solve all the issues. Librarians feel ‘disconnected’ when removed from the desk. A Calvin College librarian is mentioned regarding the students expression of what they prefer - which is a face-to-face interaction.

Carlile, H. (2007). The implications of library anxiety for academic reference services: A review of the literature. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, 38(2), 129-147.

This is an excellent literature review on library anxiety, even though it is 10 years old. It is a good overview of the implications for quality reference service. “The importance of interacting with a librarian and the reported ability of face-to-face instruction to reduce levels of library anxiety highlight the role of the academic reference services in helping to allay students’ fears and to build confidence through reassurance and an awareness ... about the library, even before they enter the building or log on to the library web page” (p. 139).

Cassidy, E. D., Colmenares, A., & Martinez, M. (2014). So text me – maybe. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 53(4), 300-312.

This is an assessment of texting behavior in chat reference transactions. They analyzed 3 years of transcripts to see how the librarians conducted themselves. The intent was to see if anything needed improvement in the interactions. Librarians needed to use more friendly language and improve the follow-up. They also needed to improve staff attentiveness in monitoring the chat.

Chow, A. S., & Croxton, R. A. (2012). Information-seeking behavior and reference medium preferences. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 51(3), 246-262.

This is an early study to see if virtual and online reference services were 'preferable' to people over other types of more traditional services. Findings suggest participants preferred face-to-face reference interactions over a suite of virtual reference options, especially students. User preferences also relate to the type of question being asked. They did not provide an option in the survey for 'self-service', which is using the library web page and/or Google. They did prove the concept of Poole's Principle of Least Effort - which posits that users will attempt to minimize the effort expended in seeking information. Sometimes the perceived least effort is not the same to the user.

Clyde, J., & Lee, J. (2011). Embedded reference to embedded librarianship: 6 years at the University of Calgary. *Journal of Library Administration*, 51(4), 389-402. doi:10.1080/01930826.2011.556963

The University of Calgary has implemented an embedded librarian program. The authors suggest that embedded librarianship may be needed now more than in the past, because researchers no longer need to enter the library and interact with librarians to access material. Librarians "need to go into the users' space to become integrated into their community and offer effective customized library services" (p. 399). Additionally, the authors suggest that to be truly embedded, librarians cannot merely provide office hours; the most effective embedded librarians are involved in the life of the department.

Coleman, J., Mallon, M. N., & Lo, L. (2016). Recent changes to reference services in academic libraries and their relationship to perceived quality: Results of a national survey. *Journal of Library Administration*, 56(6), 673-696. doi:10.1080/01930826.2015.1109879

Academic libraries combine proactive and reactive methods of reference service and much of the reference activity has been transferred to the end user instruction, online tutorials, and prompts throughout the library website as a response to service trends. We, as a group, tend to compare ourselves to each other instead of using actual metrics or "real" stats to make decisions or analyze if effective service is being provided.

Collard, S., & Whatley, K. (2011). Virtual reference/query log pairs: a window onto user need. *Reference Services Review*, 39(1), 151-166. doi:10.1108/00907321111108178

Librarians at New York University sought to better understand user needs by jointly investigating both user reference inquiries, as well as their previous searches.

Deineh, S., Middlemas, J., & Morrison, P. (2011). A new service model for the reference desk: The student research center. *Library Philosophy & Practice*, 18-28. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/554/>

Three librarians discuss changes in reference: the first argues that the basics of reference service remain the same, the second and third outline “modifications to the traditional reference interview that will help ensure a novice user learns from the reference interview, and also that an expert user is made aware of new services and collections. These techniques ... serve to keep reference service a continuing viable resource for patrons” (para. 23). The conclusion is that there is a fundamental need to still have face to face reference. They also argue that the reference interview is a form of library instruction for the student. Subsequently, every student encounter, no matter how trivial, can be used to remind the student what else the library can do for them. Using these ideas, the authors outline the changes to the services and desk at Grossmont College which is called the Student Research Center.

Deng, S., & Zhang, Y. (2015). User perceptions of social questions and answer websites for library reference services. *Electronic Library*, 33(3), 386-399. doi:10.1108/EL-12-2013-0213

This article analyzes the perception of reference services in libraries amongst individuals participating in a Social Questions & Answers site, in this case, Yahoo! Answers.

Desai, C. M., & Graves, S. J. (2008). Cyberspace or face-to-face: The teachable moment and changing reference mediums. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 47(3), 242-255.

While this article begins with the assumption that reference services happen in a variety of ways and means, the authors take great care in outlining the (now dated) tension between reference and instruction, as well as the philosophical changes in reference as a result of new technologies. The study digs deeply into the different methods of reference and if/how instruction happens during those interactions, and if/how the instruction changes based on the medium.

Dinkins, D., & Ryan, S. M. (2010). Measuring referrals: The use of paraprofessionals at the reference desk. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 36(4), 279-286.

Stetson University realized from existing data kept about reference transactions that 89% of the queries could be answered by a non-librarian, which prompted their further study of staffing the reference desk with a paraprofessional and tracking the referrals to a librarian. Their basic premise is that most “skills, such as catalog and database searching, can be taught, and many other common questions ... will be learned with on-the-job experience. The few in-depth reference questions can be referred to a librarian with minimal inconvenience to the patron” (p. 285).

Du, J. T., & Evans, N. (2011). Academic users' information searching on research topics: Characteristics of research tasks and search strategies. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 37(4), 299–306.

Ellis, J., & Phillips, A. (2013). Re-defining the service experience: forging collaboration between librarians and students. *Library Management*, 34(8/9), 603–618. doi:10.1108/LM-10-2012-0070

If collaborative learning spaces grew out of constructivist pedagogy, the authors of this case study wanted to apply the same principles to create a more collaborative service experience.

Faix, A. (2014). Peer reference revisited: Evolution of a peer-reference model. *Reference Services Review*, 42(2), 305–319. doi:10.1108/RSR-07-2013-0039

Following up on a 2010 article, the author writes an update on the peer-reference model used at Coastal Carolina University. What began as a program for specifically trained reference students has now expanded to include all student employees who are trained to answer questions that are a 1 or 2 on the READ scale. Questions above a 2 on the READ scale are referred to librarians. The program does not save librarians time – they spend the same amount of time on reference-type duties – but the author argues that the program fits well with the information commons' mission of developing more collaborative spaces and relationships.

Faix, A., MacDonald, A., & Taxakis, B. (2014). Research consultation effectiveness for freshman and senior undergraduate students. *Reference Services Review*, 42(1), 4–15. doi:10.1108/RSR-05-2013-0024

Research consultations provide one-on-one instruction that library instruction sessions cannot offer. However, the challenge for librarians is the labor-intensive nature of this service. This study was conducted with freshman level classes only. Their conclusion is that for freshman to attend both library instruction sessions and research consultations is not the most effective method for helping them. Their suggestion is that freshman should attend a general library instruction session for research projects and use the reference desk when they need additional help.

Farmer, L. J. (2016). Library space: its role in research. *Reference Librarian*, 57(2), 87–99. doi:10.1080/02763877.2016.1120620

The authors create a helpful continuum of the kinds of spaces that facilitate different aspects of the research process. While it is a broad overview, any library looking at even simple space adjustments should consider the influence of space on the variety of needs that arise during research.

Finnell, J., & Fontane, W. (2010). Reference question data mining: A systematic approach to library outreach. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 49(3), 278–286.

The authors discuss using reference questions as a means of instruction and outreach. Library staff classified reference questions by subject and class, then used the information to create research guides and suggest instruction sessions for specific classes that had a high number of questions.

Folk, A. L. (2015). Access or awareness? Identifying relationships between reference and other dimensions of public services, *ACRL Conference Proceedings*, Portland, OR. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org/acrl/files/content/conferences/confsandpreconfs/2015/Folk_Access.pdf

This study explores the relationship between reference transactions and instruction sessions. Though the results do not lead to a definite conclusion, instruction sessions appear to have a small effect on the number of reference transactions because they increase awareness of the existence of reference services.

Franks, J. A. (1997). Forming a reference philosophy. *Reference Librarian*, 28(59), 15–23. doi:10.1300/J120v28n59_03

If conflicting philosophies of delivering service exist, then the delivery of services to users can be confusing. “In order to provide service which is consistent in nature and scope, individuals within the department staff must embrace the same or very similar service philosophy” (p. 15). This article advocates for a general service ethos similar to what businesses practice and makes the service ethos a value proposition for any library department.

Gardner, Susan. (2006). Tiered Reference: The new landscape of the frontlines. *Electronic Journal of Academic and Special Librarianship*. 7(3). Retrieved from http://southernlibrarianship.icaap.org/content/v07n03/gardner_s01.htm

Gariepy, L., Hodge, M., Doherty, T., & Clark, D. (2015). A close look in the mirror: Evaluating the implementation fidelity of a consolidated service point at a research library, *ACRL Conference Proceedings*, Portland, OR. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/acrl/files/conferences/confsandpreconfs/2015/Gariepy_et_al.pdf

Garnar, M. (2016). Whither the reference desk? 20th century values in a 21st century service model. *International Information & Library Review*, 48(3), 211–216. doi:10.1080/10572317.2016.1205417

One university experiments with different models for reference service in an expanding campus: virtual library (combined with online instruction); a branch library; a flexible consultation space for librarians, tutors, etc. or an instruction space; and a kiosk featuring library services and online digital repositories of student work.

Gibson, C. & Mandernach, M. (2013). Reference service at an inflection point: Transformations in academic libraries, *ACRL Conference Proceedings*, Indianapolis, IN. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/conferences/confsandpreconfs/2013/papers/GibsonMandemach_Reference.pdf

Granfield, D., & Robertson, M. (2008). Preference for reference: New options and choices for academic library users. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 48(1), 44-53.

Hartog, Paul (2017). The “Genius” of Reference Service: A Threefold Framework as a Simple Assessment Tool. *The Christian Librarian*, 60(1), 12-21. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol60/iss1/5>

This article is a very good analysis of basic requirements of the reference interview. The author uses analogy to examine the three components in the interview of rapid response, expert knowledge, and guiding instruction. Using those three components, the author suggests an assessment method to discover successful reference interactions.

Helms, C. M., Oliveira, S., Matacio, L., & Kimakwa, S. (2016). Out of my comfort zone into yours. *New Library World*, 117(5/6), 374-391. doi:10.1108/NLW-01-2016-0005

This has a good literature review on the model of reference services outside of the library “where the students are.” They also did a survey and found that students expressed no need of librarians to help them in their academic work. Students were filled with extreme overconfidence because they were relying on the Internet and Google.

Herring, M.V. (2012). Little red herrings – Is the Internet a substitute for the library after all? Part 1. *Against The Grain*, 24(2), 70.

The author defends the original position that a librarian’s expertise is more valuable than a search algorithm and that the information economy needs librarians who know how to search, find, and make sense of everything that is available.

Jacoby, J., Ward, D., Avery, S., & Marcyk, E. (2016). The value of chat reference services: A pilot study. *Portal: Libraries & The Academy*, 16(1), 109-129.

A review of chat reference transcripts highlights the tension librarians and patrons feel between completeness of the interaction and the immediacy felt by the patron; diving into the transcripts proves to be an effective tool for assessing reference service.

Kaspar, W. A., & Macmillan, G. A. (2013). Managing a boutique library: Taking liaison to the next level. *Advances in Librarianship*, 37, 113-134. doi:10.1108/S0065-2830(2013)0000037009

This article introduces the concept of a “boutique library” (borrowed from high-250 end boutique hotels) with the following characteristics: customer-focused; highly

tailored; trend-setting and reactive, high degree of autonomy; unique services and resources; personalized; and convenience. Texas A&M University uses liaison librarians to enhance the boutique concept to serve both faculty and students. Librarians are encouraged to spend time in the departments to form relationships rather than waiting for “customers” to enter the library.

Kennedy, S. (2011). Farewell to the reference librarian. *Journal of Library Administration*, 51(4), 319-325. doi:10.1080/01930826.2011.556954

This article states that because of online resources, and self-service, a single, physical, walk-up service point is no longer needed. A point of need service is more important. So, they used embedded librarians who were liaisons and subject specialists working closely in departments and with those students. In the library they moved to an on-call service and reduced hours. This is from the University of Connecticut which has a large staff and 14 reference librarians. They even removed their reference collection but they still have a single physical service point - for all needs.

Kilzer, R. (2011). Reference as service, reference as place: A view of reference in the academic library. *Reference Librarian*, 52(4), 291-299. doi:10.1080/02763877.2011.588539

This article provides a reconsideration of the location of reference services. While doing collaborative and distributive service, there is still a need for a primary place that forms the locus of service. The author indicates that the services may not be limited to only one place, but having “a physical service point links our presence in the building to the activities of studying and learning that take place in the building” (p. 294).

King, V., & Christensen-Lee, S. (2014). Full-time reference with part-time librarians. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 54(1), 34-43.

LaGuardia, C. (2003). The future of reference: get real!. *Reference Services Review*, 31(1), 39-42.

This is a response to a RUSA program on the future of reference. The author outlines five areas for consideration in order to remain viable in the future. Librarians should design the right systems, keep a local focus on user needs, be very involved in instruction, realize a shift in question complexity, and really market reference service intently.

Leuzinger, J. (2013). Reducing service points in the academic library. *College & Research Libraries News*, 74(10), 530-533.

This article provides a short narrative of the University of North Texas library’s efforts to consolidate many desks to enhance service, in addition to librarian outreach across campus. “Providing seamless service at a blended service desk does not mean

you will know how to do everything well, it means you know and appreciate the skills and expertise of those around you so you can follow through with a smooth referral to the appropriate person” (p. 532).

Lund, J. R. (2012). Service desk shuffle. *Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances*, 25(1), 23-25. doi:10.1108/cb.2007.17126baa.002

Luo, L. (2014). Text a librarian: a look from the user perspective. *Reference Services Review*, 42(1), 34-51. doi:10.1108/RSR-10-2012-0067

While the majority of survey respondents never used text reference service, a small percentage did. Those who used the text reference service were more frequent texters in general, and expressed a high level of satisfaction with the service. Of non-users, most had not heard of the service, and whether they thought they would use it in the future aligned with their interest in text messaging in general. Suggestions for improvements to chat reference were also solicited in the survey.

Magi, T. J., & Mardeusz, P. E. (2013). Why some students continue to value individual, face-to-face research consultations in a technology-rich world. *College & Research Libraries*, 74(6), 605-618.

With the advent of online, point-of-need technologies for reference service, it is easy to dismiss not just the reference interview but also the reference consultation. The authors conducted a convincing study regarding what makes each medium successful, especially appointment-based reference service, and challenges the presumption that “connected” students do not have the time or inclination for this kind of research help.

Maloney, K., & Kemp, J. H. (2015). Changes in reference question complexity following the implementation of a proactive chat system: Implications for practice. *College & Research Libraries*, 76(7), 959-974. Retrieved from <http://crl.acrl.org/content/early/2015/03/10/crl15-725.full.pdf>

This library implemented proactive chat reference in order to serve students in the “zone of intervention”- providing help when and where students need it. In this context, implementing proactive chat increased the number of questions and their complexity.

Markovic, M. (2014). Demonstrate the value of Your library/information center and take it to the next level. *Information Today*, 31(6), 11.

Martin, P. N. (2009). Societal transformation and reference services in the academic library: Theoretical foundations for re-envisioning reference. *Library Philosophy*

& Practice, 1-8. Retrieved from Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/260/>

The article has some interesting theories for why things are the way they are. “By using the Internet, patrons, especially students, have become convinced that most information is easy to locate and available freely online. In addition, because so many queries can be answered quickly online, patrons feel ashamed if they cannot locate answers on their own. The ease and convenience of the Internet convinces our patrons that they are skilled information seekers. ... While the Internet boosts students’ search confidence, the library often has the opposite effect” (p. 4). The conclusion is, because of post-modernism, that librarians must liberate information, rather than control it.

Martin, P. N., & Park, L. (2010). Reference desk consultation assignment: An exploratory study of students’ perceptions of reference service. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 49(4), 333-340.

Student perceptions from three classes were analyzed. The students were required to have an interaction with a reference librarian. Library anxiety played a part in the reluctance of some students to make initial contact, but once they had a successful interaction, they said they would consult with a librarian in the future. Results showed that the service should be marketed to students as something that would save their time. In the end, the anxiety of the students was also reduced.

Massis, B. E. (2012). Librarians and faculty collaboration – partners in student success. *New Library World*, 113(1/2), 90-93. doi:10.1108/03074801211199077

McCabe, K. & MacDonald, J. R. W. (2011). Roaming reference: Reinvigorating reference through point of need service. *Partnership: the Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, 6(2). Retrieved from <https://journal.lib.uoguelph.ca/index.php/perj/article/view/1496/2263>

McClure, H., & Bravender, P. (2013). Regarding reference in an academic library. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 52(4), 302-308. doi:10.5860/rusq.52n4.302

This article measures the effect of consolidated reference service over seven semesters, during which consistent statistics were collected, service changes were documented, and there was a deadline for when the change in service would be implemented. The researchers were surprised to find that non-librarians were answering the reference questions requiring the skills of a librarian whether or not librarians are physically at the desk.

McLaughlin, J. E. (2011). Reference transaction assessment: Survey of a multiple perspectives approach, 2001 to 2010. *Reference Services Review*, 39(4), 536-550. doi:10.1108/00907321111186631

Megwalu, A. (2016). Reference questions: A noticeable pattern. *Reference Librarian*, 57(1), 80–84. doi:10.1080/02763877.2016.1100492

Miles, D. B. (2013). Shall we get rid of the reference desk? *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 52(4), 320–333. doi:10.5860/rusq.52n4.320

It is clear from this recent study, that most librarians still see the reference desk as the focal point for reference service. Even with all the discussion in the literature about the problems with traditional reference services and how this model of service should be done away with, most libraries continue with some variation of reference service in this way. The librarians indicated that the face-to-face interaction with patrons is the most important reason why librarians still want to offer service from the desk.

Mirtz, R. M. (2013). The second half of reference: An analysis of point-of-need roving reference questions, *ACRL Conference Proceedings*, Indianapolis, IN. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org/acrl/files/content/conferences/confsandpreconfs/2013/papers/Mirtz_SecondHalf.pdf

Mitchell, M. S., Comer, C. H., Starkey, J. M., & Francis, E. A. (2011). Paradigm shift in reference services at the Oberlin College Library: A case study. *Journal of Library Administration*, 51(4), 359–374. doi:10.1080/01930826.2011.556959

Morasch, M. J. (2013). Embedded reference: Providing research guidance within the education courseroom. *Journal of Library & Information Services In Distance Learning*, 7(3), 297–312. doi:10.1080/1533290X.2013.783524

Mosley, P. A. (2007). Assessing user interactions at the desk nearest the front door. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 47(2), 159–167.

This study clearly illustrates that most contemporary library users do not seek services based on a library department name, professional jargon, or resource branding. Instead, they phrase their queries in the context of their end product needs or the problem being faced.

Nann, J. B. (2010). Personal librarians. *AALL Spectrum*, 14(8), 20–23.

Neville, K. (2015). The reference interview today: Negotiating and answering questions face to face, on the phone and virtually. *Australian Library Journal*, 64(2), 158–159. doi:10.1080/00049670.2015.1040361

Nolen, D. S. (2010). Reforming or rejecting the reference desk: Conflict and continuity in the concept of reference. *Library Philosophy & Practice*, 1–9. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/361/>

A literature review that examines three distinct points of view (arguing in favor of a reference desk, con-arguing against a reference desk, and arguing against any human mediation at all). Nolen frames the discussion with Samuel Green's 1876 work on reference service, which among other things, introduces the concept of "library anxiety," but also suggests one of the strengths of reference is its "human-to-human interaction."

Owusu-Ansah, C., & Gontshi, V. (2015). Implementing information literacy through the personal librarian model: Prospects and challenges. *Journal of Balkan Libraries Union*, 3(2), 28-35. Retrieved from <http://dergipark.gov.tr/jblu/issue/18611/196410>

This article has the advantage to being set in a non-U.S./Canadian context; the literature review on other personal librarian programs is thorough and the program introduced in South Africa seems to be the first of its kind at the time. As a unique program, the authors outline the challenges and immediate successes of it, as well as how they expect to improve.

Oxford, E. (2016) Reference services in liberal arts libraries. *Journal of New Librarianship*, 1(1), 3-27. Retrieved from <http://www.newlibs.org/article/1189-reference-services-in-liberal-arts-libraries>

Looking specifically at a liberal arts college, this study takes into account the mission and values of the institution in addition to reviewing the geography of the library with regard to the reference desk location. These "uncontrollable" variables directly impact the way the reference services should be implemented in a specific context.

Palmer, S. S. (1999). Creating our roles as reference librarians of the future: Choice or fate? *ACRL Conference Proceedings*, Detroit, MI. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/conferences/pdf/palmer99.pdf>

Pemberton, A., Hoskins, J., & Boninti, C. (2011). Minding the gap: Identifying performance issues using the Human Performance Technology model. *Reference Services Review*, 39(2), 206-222. doi:10.1108/00907321111135457

Peters, A., & Kemp, J. (2014). Ask us anything: Communicating the value of reference services through branding. *Public Services Quarterly*, 10(1), 48-53. doi:10.1080/15228959.2014.875784

Poparad, C. E. (2015). Staffing an information desk for maximum responsiveness and effectiveness in meeting research and computing needs in an academic library. *Reference Librarian*, 56(2), 83-92. doi:10.1080/02763877.2014.977212

This article speaks about the different needs of students in the current technology academic environment. The combining of technology services and research

assistance in one desk is outlined, where questions about which resources to use and how to successfully access those resources are handled. In their tiered reference service model, everyone is cross-trained to staff the desk - no matter their level. They chose to use the role reinvention concept for the librarians. "Although transaction content has changed over the years, librarians continue to be indispensable at the Information Desk, providing instruction and ensuring maximum responsiveness and effectiveness in meeting academic library users' needs" (p. 90).

Rod-Welch, L. J. (2012). Incorporation and visibility of reference and social networking tools on ARL member libraries' websites. *Reference Services Review*, 40(1), 138-171. doi:10.1108/00907321211203694

Roy, L. (2015). Answering questions: Incorporating the human element into reference librarianship education. *Reference Librarian*, 56(2), 151-156. doi:10.1080/02763877.2015.1000786

Many librarians joke about the skills that are not learned in library school which are used daily on the job. This author describes how current library school students are taught about the reference interview and how to conduct a reference interview using various social and intellectual capacities.

Roy, L., & Gaylord, L. (2015). Asking questions: Considering the patron from direct experience. *Reference Librarian*, 56(3), 223-228. doi:10.1080/02763877.2015.1022853

This article explains a library school reference assignment which asks the students to ask questions of a librarian in person, through a chat service or other digital method, and finally to also ask a question of a customer support agent outside of a library. The focal points of this assignment is the human interaction element of a reference interview, understanding your role as the one with the question, and evaluating the service provided by the three distinct entities. The article ends with one student's description of how she completed the assignment.

Ryan, M., & Garrison, J. (2011). What do we do now?: A case for abandoning yesterday and making the future. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 51(1), 12-14.

Many changes took place at Grand Valley State University all at once, including building a new, totally futuristic, library. They rethought how reference interviews would be done in this new space, as well as all of their 'front line' services. All services were moved to a single service point, staffed by full time staff and well-trained students. In addition, other campus services were also brought in and it was renamed The Knowledge Market. The intent is to have more intradepartmental cooperation and more individual collaboration with students.

Saunders, L. I. (2012). Identifying core reference competencies from an employers' perspective: Implications for instruction. *College & Research Libraries*, 73(4), 390-404.

This article reports on a survey done about the current state of job descriptions and what competencies managers seek when hiring a reference librarian. The results and discussion of the data help determine what skills are deemed the most valuable in the current setting.

Saunders, L. et al. (2014) *Repositioning Reference: New Methods and New Services for a New Age*. Rowman & Littlefield.

This book offers a tremendous overview of what reference services are and what they need. Each chapter takes a deep dive into its area; for example, chapter three "Implications of Change" analyzes job descriptions which outlines the practical ways reference services have changed. Chapter two "Competitive Pressures Facing Reference" presents a strong argument that the library competes with itself through library instruction and various web tools.

Schwartz, M. (2014). Raising the Genius Bar. *Library Journal*, 139(9), 20.

Schwartz provides a short article discussing ways in which libraries are adapting the service model of the Apple Store to create information/technology kiosks much like the Genius Bar. The article also talks about signage that minimizes library jargon and uses more generic language (eg. "Ask Here").

Sekyere, K. (2012). QR codes in libraries: Uses and usage tracking. *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, 19(1), 95-100. doi:10.1080/10691316.2012.652551

Sgrazutti, W. D. (2006). Library liaison: A philosophy of service provision. University of Regina. Retrieved from http://ourspace.uregina.ca/bitstream/handle/10294/60/Library_Liaison_Report.pdf

Skellen, K. (2016) How less is truly more: Merging library support services. *Journal of Access Services*, 13(2), 141-149.

This article is useful for smaller libraries in particular, because it focuses on merged library support services, not simply dedicated reference service. The case study began with the purpose of creating a "consistent support experience" and designed their space and services with that in mind.

Solorzano, R. M. (2013). Adding value at the desk: How technology and user expectations are changing reference work. *Reference Librarian*, 54(2), 89-102. doi:10.1080/02763877.2013.755398

This article references VanScoy's (2010) six types of work done by reference librarians: information provision, instruction, interpersonal dimensions, guidance, counseling,

and partnership. The author concluded that of these six, only information provision has experienced a noticeable drop in the last few decades. The author suggests different models such as tiered reference, consolidated service points, and staffing librarians only during peak hours (while using students to staff non-peak hours), as well as roving reference and complete elimination of the reference desk.

Sonntag, G., & Palsson, F. (2007). No longer the sacred cow - no longer a desk: Transforming reference service to meet 21st century user needs. *Library Philosophy & Practice*, 1-16. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/111/>

Stemmer, J., & Mahan, D. (2016). Investigating the relationship of library usage to student outcomes. *College & Research Libraries*, 77(3), 359-375. doi:10.5860/crl.77.3.359

Linking institutional data to library user surveys, this study identifies several correlations between student use of the library and campus learning outcomes. Using user surveys along with institutional data, this library found multiple correlations between student use and learning outcomes. Students “who start using the library’s information resources quickly have beneficial impacts on their outcomes” (p. 372). The implication is that by putting more emphasis on the role of the library as a place and creating relationships early in student’s academic careers is more effective.

Stevens, C. R. (2013). Reference reviewed and re-envisioned: Revamping librarian and desk-centric services with LibStARs and LibAnswers. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 39(2), 202-214. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2012.11.006

Swoger, B. M., & Hoffman, K. D. (2015). Taking notes at the reference desk: Assessing and improving student learning. *Reference Services Review*, 43(2), 199-214. doi:10.1108/RSR-11-2014-0054

Concerned about student retention of information taught during reference interactions, as evidenced in assessment of SUNY Geneseo’s reference services, the authors of this article developed a form that librarians could fill out for students to keep. The need for this was discovered through a survey of student impressions of whether the form they were given would be useful, and also anecdotally when students returned for more help with their worksheet in hand.

Thorpe, A., Lukes, R., Bever, D. J., & Yan, H. (2016). The impact of the academic library on student success: Connecting the dots. *portal: Libraries & the Academy*, 16(2), 373-392. Retrieved from https://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/portal_libraries_and_the_academy/portal_pre_print/articles/16.2thorpe.pdf

Tyckoson, D. (2003). Reference at its core: The reference interview. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 43(1), 49-51.

This article focuses on the personal touch provided by reference librarians, no matter the medium. The author argues for librarians to keep that human interaction at the core of our service philosophy.

Tyckoson, D. (2003). On the desirableness of personal relations between librarians and readers: The past and future of reference service. *Reference Services Review*, 31(1), 12-16.

Though this older article predicts the future of reference that we are currently living in, it also reviews the core reference service values outlined by Samuel Green in 1876; this puts reference service at the center of the library's mission, no matter the decade. Placing reference in this historical context uses those themes as a guide to "What happens next" in reference service.

Tyckoson, D., & Sosulski, N. I. (2016). What are we stopping? and what is shifting? *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 56(2), 87-90.

Verdesca, Jr., A. F. (2010). When access for the 'gimme' world proves dismissive of finesse. *Journal of Access Services*, 8(1), 46-49. doi:10.1080/15367967.2011.531963

Verdesca, A. (2015). What's in a word: Coming to terms with reference. *Reference Librarian*, 56(1), 67-72. doi:10.1080/02763877.2015.976467

The author investigates several statements from various library organizations to discover the true definition of reference. According to the author's interpretation, reference service appears to be framed around technology, to which the author asks, "If, as it appears, information technology has become the heart of reference, where then is its soul?" (p. 71). The definition of the soul of reference is in a follow-up article.

Verdesca, A. (2015). What's in a word: Coming to terms with reference, part two. *Reference Librarian*, 56(3), 216-222. doi:10.1080/02763877.2015.1022849

This author argues the reference librarian's primary domain is the print reference collection, and the reference librarian serves to keep the student on track by pointing to print sources and encouraging the student to read and summarize their contents.

Walters, R. J., & Barnes, S. J. (1985). Goals, objectives and competencies for reference service: a training program at the UCLA Biomedical Library. *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, 73(2), 160-167. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC227573/pdf/mlab00058-0056.pdf>

Ward, D. (2011). Expanding the reference vocabulary: A methodology for applying Bloom's taxonomy to increase instruction in the reference interview. *Reference Services Review*, 39(1), 167-180. doi:10.1108/00907321111108187

Analysis of chat reference transcripts to classify them into Bloom's Taxonomy categories. Appropriate for linking instruction to reference, but the scope of the article does not extend to providing action steps for enhancing the reference interview (especially via chat) to address higher-level Bloom's Taxonomy categories.

Whisner, M. (2010). Reference librarians do not work in steel. *Law Library Journal*, 102(4), 601-603.

A first person, anecdotal article reminds reference librarians what the actual "work" is of a librarian. The work of a librarian is in many small interactions throughout the day that add up to teaching students how to use information successfully.

Wolfe, J. A., Naylor, T., & Druke, J. (2010). The role of the academic reference librarian in the Learning Commons. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 50(2), 108-113.

Woodard, B. S. (2005). One-on-one instruction: From the reference desk to online chat. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 44(3), 203-209.

This article examines the existing literature related to the philosophy of teaching during reference interactions, particularly in light of online chat reference. It addresses some of the barriers to instruction in chat, such as the lack of non-verbal cues, or lack of co-browsing capabilities.

Yang, S. Q., & Dalal, H. A. (2015). Delivering virtual reference services on the web: An investigation into the current practice by academic libraries. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 41(1), 68-86. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2014.10.003

This article looks at a random sample of 362 four year colleges in the United States and Canada whose library websites were scanned for mentions of reference activities. It specifically looked at library websites that mentioned reference services on the main page, the terminology used, whether they provided chat reference and if they had a chat box widget, and what other virtual options were available. †

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jennifer L. Walz is Head of Research & Distance Services at Asbury University. She can be contacted at jlwalz@asbury.edu. Alison Jones is Electronic Resources and Instruction Librarian at Carson-Newman University. She can be contacted at arjones@cn.edu. Erin McCoy is Reference and Instruction Librarian at Massasoit Community College. She can be contacted at mccoynazlibrarian@gmail.com. Amy C. Rice is Library Director at Northwest Nazarene University. She can be contacted at arice@nnu.edu
