



OVERDUE | EXPERTISE

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As OVERDUE begins to wind down, it's time to talk about the people who make everything we've discussed possible: librarians.

We've already discussed the qualifications that prepare someone to become a librarian, but not the expertise they bring to their work. Librarians aren't simply trained to find information; they're trained to evaluate it, organize it, and connect people with the information they actually need.

Sure, librarians spend part of their day sorting and shelving books, but that's only a small part of the job. Most of their time is spent helping patrons find what they actually need, and they're exceptionally skilled at it.

This is what librarians do all day.

Librarians must understand people, information, systems, and communities. They know that patrons rarely ask for exactly what they need, that not all information is equal, that information is organized within carefully designed systems, and that every community has its own recurring needs. One practice that brings all of this expertise together is the reference interview.

During a reference interview, librarians look beyond the question they're asked to understand the need behind it. Before offering an answer, they ask a few questions of their own to clarify what will actually be most helpful.

Libraries are remarkable institutions, but their greatest resource isn't found on the shelves or in the catalog. Its greatest resource is the people whose expertise turns their mission into everyday service, connecting information with the needs of their communities.

This has been OVERDUE. Come back next week to keep your account in good standing.

#Libraries #Librarians #Librarianship #InformationScience #LifelongLearning