Why the Reference Interview is Necessary – Common Student Misconceptions

- My question is stupid.
- I should know how to find this myself.

Principles of the Reference Interview

Initial contact

- Be approachable, smile.
- Exhibit helpfulness.

Question negotiation

- Encourage student to tell you more about the question.
- Use open-ended questions. Keep the conversation going.

Sample Questions include:

- What class is this for? (ask to see syllabus or assignment sheet)
- Please tell me more about your topic.
- What additional information can you give me?
- Do you need books or articles?

Search

- Identify possible sources. Explain, why you picked what you picked.
- Explore the resource.
- Summarize progress.

Communication and evaluation of answer

- Give source where answer was found.
- Make sure scope and level of information is correct.

Follow-up

- Make sure student is satisfied with answer.
- Send student to the library reference desk or connect them with chat reference
- Encourage the student to return, if necessary.

http://www.library.illinois.edu/training/resources/graduate_assistants/trainingmanual/refinterview.html