Exploring the Role of Repertoire in Library Reference Interactions

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ABSTRACT

Using experience to interpret a user's information need is embedded in the process of every library reference transaction. Reference workers need to constantly grow and update their base of knowledge to have a deep understanding of a variety of resources and subjects (Miller, 2011). The expert reference worker not only has knowledge of specific subjects and resources, but also has an additional level of professional knowledge regarding the successes and failures of past reference interactions. In other fields, like design, bodies of knowledge iteratively built from previous experiences are known as repertoire. Designers develop repertoire over time by integrating information from previous situations into new ones (Goldschmidt & Porter 2010). Research shows that designers with broader and more diverse repertoires make better design decisions and demonstrate greater expertise (Salmon & Gritzer 1992; Wahl & Baxter 2008). Much like designers, reference workers often deal with problems that are complex and benefit from previous experience and expertise, as well as diverse and individual perspectives built into a reference worker's personal repertoire. Our research aims to understand how, over time, reference workers collect and reflect on experiences to develop their repertoires to deal with complex inquiries and how diverse and extensive the personal repertory knowledge of reference workers is.

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ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

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