Dedication

To Sue Faerman for being a great mentor
and for supporting the scholarship of pedagogy.
To Mom and James for encouragement and support
and to an inspiring next generation—
Jack Thomas, Shackleton, James,
Keene, Isabel, and Henry.

–Tom Mackey

To the dedicated and innovative instruction librarians
with whom I’ve had the pleasure to work
in the Instruction Section of
the Association of College and Research Libraries.
To John, who helps make all things possible.

–Trudi Jacobson
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Foreword

It is a cool spring morning in the Pacific Northwest. Lilacs are blooming and rhododendron blossoms are poised to burst forth with color. I carry my kayak down to the shore, slide into the cockpit, and push off into the salt waters of Puget Sound. Paddling out a distance, I rest my paddle on the deck and float idly along with the subtle current to look around and take in the sights. But I find that on this particular morning it’s the sounds that capture me. The birds are actively bantering, crows squawk at the eagle they are chasing, the wind ruffles the leaves, the tugboat horn sounds, the water laps on the rocks at the shore . . . all sounds that ensure a viable system is operating. All sounds that would have otherwise escaped my notice had I not paused to listen.

Margaret Wheatley observed, “All change, even very large and powerful change, begins when a few people start talking with one another about something they care about . . . And as an added joy, we also discover our collective wisdom. We suddenly see how wise we can be together” (Turning to One Another, 2002). And that is precisely what Trudi and Tom have done—listened to what was needed in our professional assessment conversations and creatively achieved it through the design and execution of this book. Through these assessment scenarios we have the opportunity to eavesdrop on key collaborations and deliberations and to benefit from learning in action. Many books have led us through the process of assessment—the focus and design, the creation of outcomes, the structure of assessments. But what the editors and the chapter authors provide for us in these pages are examples of collaboratively developing integrated assessments with discipline faculty, using student success as opposed to class time or content as the basis of those conversations, and deeply analyzing and engaging student work. These are the components that assure us a viable information literacy system is operational.

Trudi and Tom invite us into one of the most important dialogues we can have—listening to students through the avenue of assessment in order to
understand and improve student learning. The assessment cycle provides us with the opportunity to communicate about learning and realize “how wise we can be together.” It’s now time for us to listen. It’s time to be inspired to act. We couldn’t ask for a more compelling resource to motivate us to dip into the water and take another paddle stroke forward.

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Assessment of learning outcomes is a central consideration for faculty, librarians, and administrators, especially as colleges, universities, and accrediting agencies mandate this process. New courses and programs must consider assessment at the start of project planning, rather than after, and existing programs are being re-examined to incorporate an assessment component. The assessment of information literacy learning outcomes has matured with the expanse of these programs in higher education. Now that information literacy has been integrated into the curriculum at many institutions, in some cases built into general education programs, assessment of the information literacy curricula is a priority. We are especially interested in the role of faculty-librarian partnerships in the development of assessment best practices. This book explores assessment strategies designed by faculty-librarian teams from institutions at the forefront of this work in the United States, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. This book presents eight innovative models for information literacy assessment in four main discipline areas: business, social science, education, and humanities. The methods explored in the book illustrate the relationship between assessment and collaboration in iterative course design and are portable to disciplinary perspectives and institutional contexts beyond those identified here.

In our first book, Information Literacy Collaborations That Work (2007), we presented faculty-librarian collaborations for teaching information literacy in multiple disciplines. We followed that project with Using Technology to Teach Information Literacy (2008), which explored novel uses of emergent technologies by faculty-librarian teams. In this third volume Collaborative Information Literacy Assessments: Strategies for Evaluating Teaching and Learning (2009) we continue our principal focus on faculty-librarian partnerships. Through these chapters we argue that collaboration is integral to the design and implementation of assessment efforts for information literacy courses and programs. Each chapter offers a qualitative and/or quantitative approach to assessment and a detailed examination of a course that incorporates information literacy. The author
teams discuss some of the challenges they faced in working together and offer suggestions for overcoming institutional barriers to developing collaborative assessment projects. Most importantly, the faculty-librarian teams in this book reflect on what they learned from their assessments to improve student learning in the courses they discuss.

This book demonstrates that when faculty and librarians work together on assessment, a more comprehensive strategy for measuring student learning outcomes is developed than if they work independently. As a result, a more complete picture of student learning emerges than if separate instruments are developed in isolation. The work of these author teams reinforces the importance of taking an integrated approach to assessment that considers the relationship between the evaluation of learning outcomes and improved course design and teaching. Faculty-librarian involvement is critical to the planning and implementation of a pedagogical approach to information literacy assessment, especially if mandated efforts are designed to impact entire programs or influence multiple institutions. The purpose of this book is to promote varied and innovative methods for collaborative information literacy assessment within a context of critical inquiry to guide emerging or established programs.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ASSESSMENT

A significant change has taken place in higher education from envisioning the classroom as a place where the teacher is at the center, and concentrating on what he or she does to achieve goals, to what the student learns, and how to measure the outcomes. According to Gilchrist and Zald, “the emphasis has now shifted to focus on student learning outcomes, and the real value of assessment in this context is the clarity it provides for students, librarians, and faculty” (2008: 165). Assessment of learning outcomes supports a student-centered dynamic that informs ongoing pedagogical development and course improvement. This process has been recognized by many institutions as crucial to understanding what and how students are learning. For example, in a member survey from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) “more than seven in 10 (72%) AAC&U member institutions assess learning outcomes across the curriculum, and an additional one in four (24%) say they are planning for this assessment” (2009: 2). The same survey indicates that 59 percent of the AAC&U member institutions address information literacy as a common learning outcome (2009: 4).

Accrediting agencies such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) promote information literacy in the standards for accreditation (Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, 2002). This emphasis on
learning outcomes as part of the accreditation process has contributed to the strong institutional response from many colleges and universities to develop and assess information literacy initiatives. Middle States emphasizes the importance of developing partnerships at institutions that develop assessment efforts: “implemented effectively, the assessment of student learning will involve the shared commitment of students, administrators and academic professionals” (p. 50). These partnerships necessarily involve faculty and librarians working together on information literacy initiatives. The importance of faculty-librarian collaboration is explicitly mentioned as a “fundamental element” in Standard 11: Educational Offerings which promotes: “collaboration between professional library staff and faculty in teaching and fostering information literacy skills relevant to the curriculum” (p. 34).

Assessment was addressed in the American Library Association’s (ALA) Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report (1989), which discussed evaluation as part of the “information age school.” ALA argued that “evaluation would be based upon a broad range of literacy indicators, including some that assess the quality and appropriateness of information sources or the quality and efficiency of the information searches themselves.” Over time, this approach was realized in many ways as colleges and universities assessed information literacy in the curriculum. ALA developed this idea further by suggesting that: “assessments would attend to ways in which students are using their minds and achieving success as information consumers, analyzers, interpreters, evaluators, and communicators of ideas.” This approach emphasizes the ways students apply information literacy skills in the real world. It is consistent with Patricia Senn Breivik’s vision for information literacy assessment as fundamental to student success and lifelong learning. She wrote, “once faculty accept the importance of information literacy to ensure the academic and career success of their students, and once they seriously plan for and assess achievement of that goal, then students will graduate as lifelong learners and productive citizens for an Information Age” (Breivik, 1998: 55).

In 2000, the Association of College and Research Libraries published the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (2000). According to ACRL (2000), “the five standards and twenty two performance indicators . . . list a range of outcomes for assessing student progress toward information literacy” (p. 6). These guidelines promote the adaptation of the standards at the local level to consider the unique mission and goals of that particular institution (ACRL, 2000). This approach offers specific information literacy competencies while encouraging innovation in the way the standards are applied in varied courses and programs. At the same time, in its discussion of assessment, ACRL reinforced the importance of developing faculty-librarian partnerships for these endeavors:
In addition to assessing all students’ basic information literacy skills, faculty and librarians should also work together to develop assessment instruments and strategies in the context of particular disciplines, as information literacy manifests itself in the specific understanding of the knowledge creation, scholarly activity, and publication processes found in those disciplines. (ACRL, 2000: 6)

ACRL provides a critical framework for faculty, librarians, and administrators to integrate information literacy into the curriculum and to include assessment in the initial planning of these initiatives. It also promotes a collaborative vision for these efforts to include faculty and librarians as equal and active participants in this process. Gilchrist and Zald argue that “the standards now serve as an excellent starting point for campus-based discussions between librarians and faculty members about what information literacy means when viewed through the lens of an institution’s unique curriculum, philosophies, and values” (2008: 167). Through these conversations, faculty and librarians have the means to advance collaborative information literacy assessments in a manner that is process oriented and adaptable to change.

Assessment may be met with some resistance from faculty and librarians who are concerned that it means an appraisal of them rather than as a way to measure and analyze learning outcomes. But they may be more willing to participate in a process that is shared and reinforces the learning objectives of the curriculum than one that resembles an individual course evaluation or disconnected in some way from the larger community. This book, which advances collaborative assessments by modeling informed best practices from faculty and librarian teams, promotes the development of innovative information literacy programs that include a necessary focus on student learning. As you will see in the chapters that follow, faculty and librarians develop innovative and effective strategies for assessing information literacy through closely aligned partnerships.

BOOK ORGANIZATION

The book is organized by discipline into three main sections: Part I: Business, Part II: Social Science and Education, and Part III: Humanities. Although this disciplinary emphasis divides the book into three parts, each author team presents an assessment model that could be applied in different fields. In our own review of the chapters we were impressed with the diverse and flexible methodologies taken by each author team. All of the chapters follow a standardized format, with a literature review, case study model, discussion of partnership, examination of assessment data, as well as an assessment of the
assessment. Most important, our author teams provide successful models for faculty and librarians who want to design or redesign their own information literacy assessment efforts. We also wrote section introductions with summaries of each chapter and recommendations for applying the assessments in different arenas.

Part I: Business

In the first part of the book, we present two chapters that focus on information literacy assessment within the field of business and finance. The chapter authors explore a methodology based on citation analysis and an embedded model for information literacy assessment. We start the book with a chapter by Casey M. Long and Milind M. Shrikhande from Georgia State University who explore assessment in an elective finance course. Through this case study, the authors examine the use of citation analysis to develop an effective teaching model for information literacy instruction. In the second chapter, Douglas G. Carrie and Lynne M. Mitchell from The University of Auckland Business School in New Zealand describe a holistic approach to information literacy assessment in an undergraduate degree program that prepares students for careers in business.

Part II: Social Science and Education

The second part of this book includes three chapters from the perspectives of social science and education. The faculty-librarian teams in this section examine an integrated library component, collaborative curriculum interventions, and online assessment strategies. Julie K. Gilbert and Christopher P. Gilbert from Gustavus Adolphus College explore the assessment of information literacy in an undergraduate political science curriculum. This data-driven approach provides a big picture analysis that finds a positive link between multiple instruction sessions and the development of information literacy skills. The second chapter in this section is by Amanda A. Harrison and Angela Newton from the University of Leeds. The authors describe the collaborative design of an assessment instrument to measure the information literacy learning outcomes of psychology and nursing students. This section closes with a chapter by Julie Bostock, Susan Graves, and Ruth Wilson from Edge Hill University in the United Kingdom. This author team presents a case study about the collaborative design of an online assessment strategy for adult learners.

Part III: Humanities

The third part of the book introduces three chapters that examine assessment endeavors in the humanities. The author teams in this section describe a self-assessment approach for writing courses, a holistic assessment in a writing
program, and an assessment model in the core curriculum. We begin this part of the book with a chapter by Leslie Bussert and Norm Pouliot from Cascadia Community College and the University of Washington Bothell. This team developed a self-assessment model to enhance learning outcomes in writing courses by requiring students to play an active role in the documentation of their own learning. In the next chapter, Deborah B. Gaspar and Pamela S. Presser from The George Washington University describe a holistic assessment project designed for an undergraduate writing program. This author team shares the rubrics they created as part of their collaborative work on an assessment committee for *The Big Read*. The closing chapter is by Becky Canovan, Anne Marie Gruber, Mary Anne Knefel, and Michele McKinlay from University of Dubuque. The authors write about their assessment of an interdisciplinary course on research and writing in the core curriculum.

**ASSESSING YOUR COURSES AND PROGRAMS**

We encourage faculty and librarians from a range of disciplines to explore these chapters and to consider how a particular technique could be similarly applied at different institutions. Based on the work of the author teams in this book, assessment is a dynamic process that influences effective teaching practices and improves student learning. When carefully designed, it allows instructors to think about teaching and learning in new ways. Although some of the techniques covered here may not fit your particular college or university setting, many of instruments could be easily adapted to different courses, programs, and fields of study. When considering the varied approaches taken in this book, assessment offers a toolkit of possibilities for the design of new instruments, using quantitative and qualitative methods, summative and formative approaches, peer and self-assessments, rubrics and surveys, as well as in-class and online options. These approaches are expanded considerably and applied to disciplinary environments when librarians and faculty work together. Now that the assessment of learning outcomes has become such a major trend in higher education, with wide institutional support, it is time to hear from the faculty and librarians who are at the vanguard of this practice.

The e-mail address of every author is available toward the end of the book in case you have specific questions or comments about any of the chapters.

**REFERENCES**


