

Mackey, Thomas P., and Trudi E. Jacobson, eds. *Collaborative Information Literacy Assessments: Strategies for Evaluating Teaching and Learning*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2010. 242 pgs. + Ill. ISBN: 9781555706937. Softcover \$90.00

Stephanie Ganic Braunstein, Louisiana State University Libraries

Using faculty-librarian partnerships as their main focus, Mackey and Jacobson have published three books with Neal-Schuman on the teaching of information literacy (IL) at the college and university level. While the first (*Information Literacy Collaborations That Work*, 2007) sets in place the basis for the series and discusses “faculty-librarian collaborations for teaching information literacy in multiple disciplines,” and the second (*Using Technology to Teach Information Literacy*, 2008) zeroes in on the use of “emergent technologies by faculty-librarian teams” to teach information literacy, this third volume, *Collaborative Information Literacy Assessments*, addresses the aspect of the assessment of IL instruction—whether qualitative or quantitative. Organized into three sections—on Business as a discipline, on Social Science[s] and Education, and on Humanities, with each section divided into individual chapters devoted to case studies reported by faculty-librarian teams who have successfully worked together to teach information literacy and to assess the outcomes of their partnerships, the aim of the text is to reinforce “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” (xiv).

In Part I, Business, the editors include two articles exemplifying two very

different approaches to assessment of IL instruction. The first article, written by a faculty-librarian team from Georgia State University, uses the concept of citation analysis to determine success or failure of IL instruction in a course on international finance. Citation analysis, a sub-set of bibliometrics, takes apart a bibliography and awards points or other similar weighting measures to each of the bibliographic entries. In this case, the following characteristics were rated:

- Quality of Sources—appropriateness, respect within discipline
- Variety of Sources—adequate numbers, diversity of perspective
- Citation Format—consistency, accuracy
- Information Use—proper quoting or paraphrasing, evidence of plagiarism

These measures were then weighted, and a score was given to the cumulative entries making up the bibliography. These separate scores were averaged, creating a semester-wide score that was then compared over time to other semesters' scores in order to track the efficacy of the IL instruction.

The second article in the Business section comes from a foreign/international perspective in that it is about IL assessment at the University of Auckland's Business School in New Zealand. This writing team describes a more holistic approach to IL assessment, as it involves the scaffolding of several different assignments in order to get a broader picture of how well students absorb and retain IL instruction that was thoroughly embedded into the class pedagogical goals/process/structure/syllabus. This "embedded approach" is related to and dependent upon the standards of IL as identified by the Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy, or ANZIIL (<http://oil.otago.ac.nz/oil/index/ANZIIL-Standards.html>). Not surprisingly, the markers

for assessment for the holistic approach are similar to those for the citation analysis approach, in that the assessors are looking for evidence that students can, after receiving IL instruction, “integrate research into written work through correct referencing” (36). So, while formal bibliometrics-related assessment tools are not used by the assessors at University of Auckland, a research essay with an annotated bibliography is used to “test” the skills students were taught in the IL components of their classes. Rather than being a complex, scientific citation analysis, this methodology relies, instead, on annotations of students’ sources and their submissions of “online research log[s] documenting their information search processes [including] a detailed description of search strategies and sources used to find the selected articles or chapters” (42).

Other measurements are tracked in this program: For example, statistics are gathered on the usage of the electronic resources offered by the library, on the voluntary participation of students in library instruction sessions, and on the number of requests students make for one-on-one librarian assistance beyond what is normally offered. As students move further through the Business Program into year two, they receive less hands-on oversight from librarians, who then function more peripherally but with almost as much impact on the development of students’ IL skills. This impact comes from web guides created by the Business Librarians, with the courses relevant to the second year experience in mind. At the end of the program, the third year, the focus again becomes narrower; and as students work on a capstone project, librarians support individuals and their specific research needs.

Part II, Social Science and Education, presents chapters by author teams from both US and UK institutions, both of whom offer insights on using “student survey data,

narrative self-assessments, multiyear student skills analysis, and a multi-layered approach with e-learning evaluation” (53). Once again, the methodology of assessment involves some combination of holistic/self-reflective/anecdotal evidence with informal citation analysis. Perhaps the most useful chapter in this section is one that deals with Adult Learners: “Collaboration in Action: Designing an Online Assessment Strategy for Adult Learners.” The chapter’s introduction prepares the reader for information on how to provide and assess IL instruction for “adult learners who may have considerable professional and life experience but who may be lacking in confidence to study at a higher level . . . [or who] may be challenged in terms of their technological skills” (109).

The IL program at the school, Edge Hill University in northwest England, is a module integrated into the coursework for the adult learners, having components delivered both face-to-face and online. This module is the result of an ambitious endeavor, dependent upon the creation of an academic team composed of members from four academic communities: Learning Technologists, Academic Staff (includes the Module Leader), Study Skills Advisors, and Information Professionals (“an academic liaison coordinator who had a background in information literacy” [114]). The module, referred to as Springboard Pedagogy, supports “multilayered” assessment. Multilayered assessment vehicles include self-assessment skills audits, reflective assignments in which students describe their ongoing processes in attaining IL skills, and a final graded written assignment. This chapter claims that the IL instruction was successful for this adult demographic by noting “that the use of learning technologies to develop information literacy skills benefitted the students in the application of these skills in the workplace . . . [while] bridging the gap between academic and workplace learning” (123).

In the final section—Humanities—three more chapters offer case studies of what essentially amounts to freshmen/sophomore level Composition and Rhetoric classes, with a slightly larger than normal dose of IL instruction. Since IL and Critical Thinking skills go hand-in-hand, these courses are staples at many colleges and universities in the US. The final chapter in this group, “Many Voices, One Goal: Measuring Student Success through Partnerships in the Core Curriculum,” stands out by its use of the quantitative assessment instrument, TRAILS (Tool for Real-Time Assessment of Information Literacy Skills) at the University of Dubuque, a private university located in Iowa. TRAILS is discussed in the context of two consecutive subsections in the chapter: “Instruction in the Core” and “The Programmatic Assessment Model.” As the subtitles suggest, these subsections concern the basics of the Core Curriculum at Dubuque and the assessment of that Core Curriculum, including its emphasis on IL. Unfortunately, for the reader, while these subsections arguably contain the most relevant information about the Core Curriculum and the part that IL plays in that curriculum, these very same subsections are the most confusing to decipher. The main reason for this confusion is the complexity of the Core’s taxonomy. When the reader is confronted with information on several different courses that often feed one into another and information on when these courses are to be taken by students during their matriculation at the University, trying to play the matching game becomes difficult. What could have helped this reader navigate this detailed information is a graphic—specifically, a table explaining the nature of each course, how it fits into the full curriculum, and when the course needs to be completed in order to keep the process flowing. Aside from that slight flaw, the chapter is thorough (running thirty-five pages) and includes many other graphics, including a Curriculum

Map (Appendix 8.1) that shows the relevancy between ACRL Information Literacy Standards/Performance Indicators and the eight courses that make up the Core. It is within this Map that the other information about when each course is required to be taken could logically fit. Appendix 8.2 is a copy of the TRAILS Assessment Test as given in fall 2006. This appendix alone makes the chapter worth reading, in order to gain more insight into what questions are being asked in assessment testing of IL training.

In the end, this third book on collaborative IL training should be read by anyone interested in the topic and used for gathering examples of how to implement IL training by finding out what was already done and how well it worked. Although this reviewer has not read the two prior books published by these editors, she would be willing to go out on a limb and say that this third book is probably all anyone would need since it provides a summation of the information in the other two books as part of its purpose of exemplifying assessment strategies through the use of case studies. Also, the fact that many of the case studies involve institutions outside of the US makes for an interesting and enlightening cross-cultural approach.