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Book Review

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Chan, L. et al 2002. *Budapest Open Access Initiative*. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Retrieved 22 January 2007].

Mackey, T. P. and Jacobson, T. E. (2010). *Collaborative information literacy assessments: strategies for evaluating teaching and learning*. London: Facet. pp242. ISBN: 9781856047067. £52.95. Pbk.

**Reviewed by: Fiona Bell, Assistant Subject Librarian, University of Chester
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This edited book is the 3rd volume of a series focussing mainly on collaborative information literacy. The title concentrates on case studies of faculty-librarian assessments and the straightforward title says exactly what the book is about. The thorough contents page details the chapters as they are grouped into 3 parts, by discipline: business, social science & education and lastly humanities. Each discipline has 2 or 3 case studies from institutions in the US, UK, and New Zealand, although 5 of the 8 projects are US-based.

Variety is a theme of this book. Each case study is from a different institution, country, discipline or age group and each assessment type is unique to that case study. No two cases are the same. Each project is set out in a standard structure covering the introductory background, through the methodology, analysis of results and finally the limitations & conclusion. The majority of cases have a very thorough and robust methodology, with sound statistical testing. Also, most of the cases assess retained, deep learning, not simply the surface learning at the end of a session.

The quality of the chapters is variable. Some projects use a unique assessment method where the librarian is fully integrated into the project, and so provide practical examples worth adapting for use within one's own institution; others are somewhat idealistic about the ability of libraries to invest the time required to implement particular information literacy assessment strategies. One assessment certainly applies the term 'collaborative' very loosely, as there appears to be no significant collaboration between library and academic staff. Librarians are simply offered class time to provide information literacy training to students and this training is then assessed using a questionnaire in the same class – somewhat stretching the definition 'collaborative assessment'. Despite this criticism, the majority of projects are grounded in, and designed around, pedagogical theory, and certainly provide an informative and thought-provoking read. The case studies are very portable and could easily be adapted to suit your particular institution or discipline.

Considering the glut of information literacy books, this title provides a welcome and useful contribution by focusing on the debate about information literacy assessment and evaluation strategies, complementing this with a number of valuable examples from a variety of fields. There are also useful tables and figures to help break down the blocks of text and explain some of the finer details.

Inevitably, improvements could be made. The descriptions of the assessment methods would benefit from being clarified. For some chapters, it is difficult to

discern what the assessment actually is, requiring a number of re-reads to understand. Each chapter could also be improved with a brief description of the actual content of the training given, to discern whether different teaching techniques produce different results. No chapter gives this information, but rather focuses only on detailing the assessment method.

This book gives no groundbreaking conclusions. Ultimately, the outcome of every project is predictably positive which sometimes feels a little repetitive. However, it does back up the wealth of evidence every academic librarian holds to support the idea that any information literacy training, when compared to no training, is going to be of benefit.

This book would be of use to any librarian providing information literacy training. It can be read cover-to-cover, though readers can also gain valuable insights simply by reading those chapters that relate to their own discipline or institution type, as the chapters can be taken as stand alone examples. In an era of budget cuts this book is rather pricey, but because of the value of many of the case studies, I believe every academic library interested in developing their information literacy provisions could still defend its purchase.