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## Book Review: Classroom Assessment Techniques for Librarians

Amanda K. Izenstark  
*University of Rhode Island, amanda@uri.edu*

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## CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES FOR LIBRARIANS

by *Melissa Bowles-Terry and  
Cassandra Kvenild*

Reviewed by  
Amanda Izenstark  
*University of Rhode Island*

*Classroom Assessment Techniques for Librarians* is a slender volume that offers a rich array of assessment strategies for librarians to use in instruction. The book opens with an excellent introduction to classroom assessment that will also serve as a welcome review for those readers with experience in this arena. The authors note that Thomas Angelo and K. Patricia Cross' work *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers* (1993) inspired this present book. They also draw on Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe's *Understanding by Design* (2005), translating its guidance to the library instruction landscape. The Introduction includes a sample set of learning outcomes, which will assist librarians who are new to, or seeking guidance in, this component of both instructional design and assessment.

While disciplinary faculty have the opportunity to get to know students in the context of complete academic courses,

librarians may often see students only once and without preceding interactions. The book's first chapter, "Assessing Prior Knowledge and Understanding," addresses this challenge and presents related assessment techniques. Some of these (such as *minute papers*) are well known and may be familiar to readers, but the authors also highlight some techniques that are new to this reviewer. In nearly all cases, the presented strategies are simple enough for a teaching librarian to incorporate into even brief instruction and deliver to students on a slip of paper, or in the form of an online questionnaire presented with polling software or within a learning management system.

Chapter two, "Assessing Skill in Analysis and Critical Thinking," directly addresses the assessment of students' critical thinking skills and will be valuable for librarians who are working to connect their instruction with the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2015). Those inspired by the "Research as Inquiry" frame (p. 7), or by the aim expressed in the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* that students learn to "evaluate information and its sources critically" (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2000, p. 3), will find the *think, pair, share*, the *pro and con grids*, and the additional assessments described in this chapter to be helpful possibilities for assessment when engaging students in thinking about information sources and content. This

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chapter also presents an example of a *content, form, and function outline*, an assessment technique that requires more time and planning to implement but that may enhance librarian collaboration with disciplinary faculty.

In Chapter 3, “Assessing Skill in Synthesis and Creative Thinking,” the *one-sentence summary* is explored through examples specific to the *Framework*, along with *concept maps* and *invented dialogues* (both good options for priming student researchers for creative thinking about their research topics). Chapter 4, “Assessing Skill in Application,” provides techniques for evaluating what students may have learned and whether they can apply this learning. Variations of the *3-2-1* assessment, paraphrasing, and class modeling are discussed.

The book’s closing chapters, “Assessing Attitudes and Self-Awareness” and “Assessing Learner Reactions,” delve into a number of techniques (*opinion polls*, *research logs*, and *chain notes*, for example) which are more subjective and engage students in reflection. The authors note that these assessments can “help students improve as observers and assessors of their own learning” (p. 92). The book concludes with two concise appendices: one introduces the use of rubrics in instruction, while the other provides guidance on writing learning outcomes. The book’s short bibliography is arranged thematically, providing the reader with leads to select sources that address assessment, instructional design, library instruction, learning theory, and standards.

*Classroom Assessment Techniques for Librarians* presents assessment techniques

with practical examples and helpful, accompanying suggestions concerning the appropriate choice and use of these techniques; tips and strategies for scoring responses; and guidance on working with assessment results. It provides a well-designed roadmap for librarians to pursue the planning and implementation of classroom assessment from start to finish and is a welcome resource for both novice and experienced librarian educators.

## REFERENCES & RELATED RESOURCES

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