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## Collaborative Information Literacy Practices to Connect Theory to Practice in Rehabilitation Counseling Students

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*Peer Reviewed Article*

## Collaborative Information Literacy Practices to Connect Theory to Practice in Rehabilitation Counseling Students

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### Abstract

The authors offer this case study of collaborating to scaffold information literacy learning into a semester-long research assignment within an undergraduate rehabilitation services course. The goal of the partnership was to teach students to research a rehabilitation theory/intervention in the professional literature and connect the evidence to rehabilitation services available locally for individuals with disabilities. Specific collaborative practices are identified as essential to the success of this pedagogical project, specifically the giving of time, the scaffolding of learning, and the continual return to reflection in the teaching and learning process, which are all enabled by the sharing of expertise between partners. The authors affirm that collaboration between librarians and course faculty in the counseling and human services fields improves outcomes for connecting theory to practice. This is an important component of evidence-based practice to develop in students the essential dispositions of more mindful and ethical future human services professionals.

Keywords: collaboration, information literacy, rehabilitation counseling, counseling and human services, Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, pedagogy, time, scaffolding, assignment design, reflection, expertise, librarian faculty status

Educators who teach information literacy aim for students to experience the value of targeted engagement with evidence in order to accomplish a meaningful learning activity. Collaboration between information literacy educators who bring complementary expertise to the partnership can help this goal be achieved. For the au-

thors, university faculty colleagues and educators in an information literacy program and counseling and human services program, respectively, "collaboration" is an umbrella term that involves a series of interconnected pedagogical practices connecting librarians, course faculty, and students. When these practices are pursued intentionally in relationship to each



other and the project as a whole, they represent an innovative approach to information literacy teaching and learning situated in a particular professional discipline, in this case rehabilitation counseling.

This article presents a case study in which the authors collaborated to redesign a comprehensive semester-long assignment to target and improve the information literacy learning of students. Through a collaborative partnership that deployed the information literacy practices identified and developed in this report, the authors revised the assignment to incorporate intentionally scaffolded exercises that helped students move more mindfully along the theory-to-practice continuum. The process of connecting rehabilitation counseling theories to the evidence-based practices of the profession is a cornerstone of ethical practice.<sup>1</sup> The information literacy skills and dispositions developed through this

collaboration between the librarian, rehabilitation educator, and students result in students connecting rehabilitation counseling theory to practice through authentic learning facilitated by the revised assignment.

There are three practices that make up the framework for collaboration that grew out of the pedagogical project this case study reports: 1) structural support and incentive to give time to the project; 2) the scaffolding of learning tasks and assignment components through the development of new learning activities in the course; and, 3) the critical role of reflection in the project, taking place between the faculty collaborators and also built into the learning activities for students. These practices have as their foundation a shared recognition of complementary expertise brought to the partnership by the collaborators. (Figure 1)

Figure 1. Interconnected collaborative practices



In this case study, the faculty librarian holds the degree of MLIS and has developed her expertise within the field of information literacy teaching and learning as both a researcher and practitioner; her expertise in the research process, information literacy teaching and learning, and instructional design directly informed the collaboration. The rehabilitation educator in the partnership has her Ph.D. in rehabilitation counseling and is a nationally certified rehabilitation counselor who has clinical field experience as well as both quantitative and qualitative research and publication experience; her subject expertise in rehabilitation counseling and knowledge of discipline-specific pedagogy as a rehabilitation educator directly informed the collaboration. In the framework for collaboration reported here, this acknowledgment of complementary expertise is essential because without it the interconnected practices that make up the collaboration would be stunted.

The giving of time, the scaffolding of learning, and the continual return to reflection, all occurring in a partnership of respect borne from a shared recognition of expertise, are the methods that characterize the collaboration this case study exemplifies. They are practices that can be engaged by all information literacy educators, even as local teaching contexts differ. This case study will provide concrete examples of each practice and illustrate their positive impact on the development of information literacy in students studying to be human services professionals.

### Related Literature

Librarian subject liaisons to undergraduate programs in the health professions have a long history of working with course faculty to integrate information literacy education into the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> The documented evidence of successful collaboration between librarians and faculty in nursing, occupational therapy, and physical therapy is plentiful.<sup>3,4,5</sup> However, there is a

dearth of examples in the literature of successful collaboration between librarians and faculty in counseling and human services programs, including rehabilitation counseling. In relation to this body of literature, this case study fills a gap.

The practices that make up the collaboration in this case study do, however, find attention in the body of literature that focuses on the opportunities and challenges of collaboration between librarians and course faculty. The role in successful librarian / course faculty collaboration of time, assignment design, reflection, and acknowledged expertise are explored to varying degrees in the information literacy literature.<sup>6,7,8,9</sup> Ivey found in a qualitative study of librarian / course faculty partnerships that the most important elements to successful collaboration were “a shared, understood goal; mutual respect, tolerance, and trust; competence for the task at hand by each of the partners; and ongoing communication,” four factors that echo and converge with the pedagogical practices articulated in this present case study.<sup>10</sup> Julien and Pecoskie provide in their study of librarians’ experiences of their teaching role a qualitative analysis of the role of time in librarian / course faculty collaboration where prioritizing (or not) the time needed to collaborate successfully becomes an issue of power and equity between librarians and course faculty; they found that “This gift of time is a distinct link between the giver (teaching faculty) and receiver (librarian). This linkage connects the giver and receiver into a reciprocal exchange relationship which is interconnected with power relations.”<sup>11</sup> Baer also documents the effect of asymmetrical relationships between librarians and course faculty on meaningful collaboration, noting that “Open dialogue, along with qualities like mutual respect and trust, is less likely to develop when a significant power imbalance is in place.”<sup>12</sup>

The body of literature on librarian / course faculty collaboration provides a multitude of evidence that each of the practices presented in this



case study – giving time, scaffolding learning, integrating reflection, and sharing expertise – are individually important to successful collaborations in support of information literacy development in students. The authors intend this case study to be a contribution to this discourse that explicitly integrates these separate information literacy instructional practices into a single framework of collaboration, situating them in a particular professional disciplinary context (i.e., rehabilitation education), and providing a model for deepening the collaborative practices already documented in the field.

Finally, this case study draws directly from professional guidelines in the fields of rehabilitation counseling and librarianship. Guidelines included at both the planning and assessment stages of the project include the *Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors*, which articulates the rehabilitation counselor’s responsibility to “engage in practices that are based on accepted research methodologies and evidence-based practices,” and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (hereafter *ACRL Framework*).<sup>13,14</sup> The *ACRL Framework* “is developed around a set of ‘frames,’ which are those critical gateway or portal concepts through which students must pass to develop genuine expertise within a discipline, profession, or knowledge domain,” making it an excellent tool for collaboration to develop information literacy in students studying a particular professional discipline.<sup>15</sup> More on the specifics of how the authors used the *ACRL Framework* in their pedagogical collaboration is offered below. Throughout the case study, both the *ACRL Framework* and the *Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors* are used to situate the teaching and learning reported within the broader professional contexts of both rehabilitation educators and librarians.

## Collaboration in Context

Given the relationship between material resources and constraints on the one hand and the pedagogical practices that enable successful collaboration on the other, it is essential to give attention to the contexts within which collaboration in support of information literacy development occurs. In the collaboration reported in this article, there are several distinct yet overlapping contexts that shape the way the practices of **time**, **scaffolding**, and **reflection**, all informed by shared **expertise**, play out. These include the institutional, disciplinary, and curricular contexts within which the authors developed and implemented the pedagogical interventions described below.

### *Institutional Context*

The authors work at the University of Scranton, a Catholic and Jesuit master’s comprehensive university with a full-time enrollment (FTE) of around 5,000 students. At this university there are nine full-time librarians, five of which teach in the Information Literacy program and serve as subject liaisons to three to six departments each. Subject liaison work here involves both information literacy instruction and collection development responsibilities. Librarians at the university have faculty status with professorial rank (e.g., Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, etc.) and access to tenure in the same way that non-library faculty do, a condition that contributes to a campus culture in which faculty librarians are understood to be experts who deserve the same respect that all faculty at the university are afforded. Faculty librarians have access to the same faculty development funding and incentives as their non-librarian counterparts, with the exception of funding that incentivizes for non-library faculty the integration of information literacy into courses through collaboration with a librarian; more about this incentive will be described below.



Contributing further to an institutional culture of librarians being respected as experts in their areas of librarianship is the fact that the University of Scranton Weinberg Memorial Library is led by an academic Dean of the Library who reports to the Provost alongside the other academic deans at the institution. In addition to the Library, there are three colleges at the university that round out the units that are led by academic deans; of these, the Counseling and Human Services Department is housed in the Panuska College of Professional Studies and prepares graduates at both the undergraduate and graduate levels for counseling careers with specializations in rehabilitation, clinical mental health, and school counseling.

#### *Disciplinary Contexts*

The specific disciplinary contexts that shaped the collaboration are both found within broader disciplinary umbrellas. Rehabilitation counseling is a specialization within counselor education and is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). At the University of Scranton, this discipline shares an academic department with other counseling and human services disciplines. Additionally, rehabilitation counselors are nationally certified by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC), which also maintains and continuously updates the discipline-specific code of ethics.<sup>16</sup>

Information literacy is both a competency and a disciplinary body of knowledge developed through instructional practice that falls within the broader field of librarianship. The ACRL *Framework* is the guiding document for information literacy teaching and learning in institutions of higher education in the United States.<sup>17</sup> This ACRL *Framework* moves academic teaching librarians from a primarily standards- and skills-based approach to learning to an approach that contextualizes information within the dynamic

systems used to produce, access, and disseminate it. This contextualized approach requires a deeper understanding in both teachers and learners of broader concepts related to information, scholarship, and knowledge production. Collaboration between librarians and disciplinary faculty is necessary to succeed at developing information literacy in students who are learning to do research within their chosen professions in this complex information environment.

#### *Curricular Contexts*

The collaboration reported in this article took place in the Counseling and Human Services course CHS 342: Foundations of Rehabilitation. The primary purpose of this course in the undergraduate Counseling and Human Services curriculum is to introduce to students the profession of rehabilitation counseling and the scope of practice across the public, private, and non-profit settings. Students develop sensitivity, appreciation, and understanding of what it means to be an individual with a disability in this society. Topics covered include the principles of rehabilitation, concepts of independent living, supported employment, transition, and an introduction to the state/federal vocational rehabilitation system. In the Fall 2017 semester, when this pedagogical collaboration took place, there were 13 students enrolled in the course.

At the University of Scranton, information literacy is integrated across the curriculum through course-based instruction and other collaborative activities that are mapped to the Library's Information Literacy Program Learning Outcomes, which are in turn mapped to the ACRL *Framework*. The collaboration between the authors was sparked by an Information Literacy Stipend of \$1,000 offered by the Library to course faculty to incentivize working with a faculty librarian to redesign a course or assignment to increase the development of information literacy in students in the course. The stipend creates the conditions



in which course faculty recognize and engage the particular expertise of the librarian who liaises with their discipline within the campus curriculum; however, only the course faculty receives the stipend, potentially disrupting the gains whereby the librarian's expertise is recognized and valued. In the pedagogical project reported here, the assignment that was chosen for redesign is called the Rehabilitation Resource Report.

The goal for the assignment is to have students experience the link between rehabilitation counseling theory/research and human services practice by better understanding community rehabilitation services as well as the relationship between those services and the rehabilitation literature. Students are asked to select a rehabilitation program from the local community that provides services to individuals with disabilities. They then need to search the rehabilitation literature to find out about theoretical and evidence-based practice approaches that connect with the services being provided by the community program they chose. Finally, they go for a site visit/interview of the community program and write about the similarities and differences they find between what is being reported in the literature and what is happening in real world application in the local community, putting their knowledge gleaned from the literature in conversation with professional practice.

In undergraduate counselor education, students are often asked to work with published literature to research particular topics, populations, and interventions. Additionally, courses often incorporate guest speakers or site visits to better understand community rehabilitation settings and services. However, there is often a disconnect between students' newly found knowledge from the literature and its application to real world contexts. The crossover from theory to practice can be challenging to demonstrate. In this case study, the rehabilitation educator of the partnership sought out the librarian's expertise

to make intentional pedagogical changes to the assignment that would strengthen the bridge between theory and practice for her students. Before this collaboration, information literacy had not yet been intentionally integrated into the undergraduate rehabilitation counseling curriculum at the institution.

### **Pedagogical Practices in Action**

What follows is a narrative analysis of the collaborative process the authors engaged in during their redesign of the Rehabilitation Resource Report assignment in CHS 342: Foundations of Rehabilitation during the Fall 2017 semester. This analysis will articulate the specifics of the assignment redesign and its impact on student learning through the lens of the three interconnected practices the authors argue are essential to successful collaboration in support of information literacy within disciplinary contexts: the giving of **time**, the **scaffolding** of learning, and the role of **reflection**. Moreover, the report that follows makes explicit the ways that a shared recognition of complementary **expertise** is foundational to the success of these pedagogical practices in action.

#### *Sharing Expertise through Time*

The investment of time on the part of all collaborators is an indicator that they value the pedagogical project of improving student learning through shared expertise.<sup>18</sup> In the case of redesigning the Rehabilitation Resource Report, the faculty collaborators met on three separate occasions in support of the assignment redesign, and then on two other occasions to review results. They spent the first meeting sharing expertise, orienting the rehabilitation educator to information literacy pedagogy, and orienting the librarian to the field of rehabilitation counseling as well as the learning outcomes of the course and assignment.





In discussing the assignment, the partners collaboratively developed student learning outcomes related to information literacy. The ACRL *Framework* served as a springboard for conversation, providing a common vocabulary for describing the information literacy learning this assignment aims to elicit in students. For example, in one of these meetings, they identified together the interplay between the following assignment components: 1) the student's chosen rehabilitation intervention (i.e., their research topic); 2) the rehabilitation literature presenting research and theory about that intervention; and, 3) the evidence from the local service provider about that intervention, gleaned through both preliminary research of the provider's service offerings and direct research through a site visit and interview. When the faculty collaborators mapped out these components of the assignment in relation to each other and across the assignment's timeline within the course, the opportunity emerged to frame this research project within the information literacy conceptual frames of Research as Inquiry and Scholarship as Conversation.<sup>19</sup>

Through further conversation about information literacy practices within the rehabilitation counseling field, the collaborators identified multiple ways that Research as Inquiry and Scholarship as Conversation might inform and shape the intended pedagogical interventions in the assignment. To complete the research project, students work toward the following learning outcomes: they analyze their topics of inquiry (i.e., the rehabilitation intervention provided by the local service provider) in order to generate disciplinary search terms used to strategically search for appropriate articles in the databases; they increase their knowledge of and ability to read and utilize rehabilitation literature; they increase their confidence and ability to communicate with rehabilitation providers about evidence-based practices from the literature; and,

they make grounded connections between theory/research about rehabilitation interventions and the ways it informs real world application.

During these conversations about redesigning the assignment, the rehabilitation educator was able to share expertise by identifying specific rehabilitation literature sources to target, providing examples of applying findings in the rehabilitation literature to the specific work of rehabilitation agencies and programs in the local area, and grounding the learning outcomes within the disciplinary aims of the assignment and course. These learning outcomes were borne from conversation and collaboration between colleagues eager to share their particular expertise in support of students and their learning; furthermore, they provide the opportunity for students to experience what it means to approach research as inquiry and to both understand and enter into the conversation about an area of their future professional practice. Through dedicated time in the form of meetings and conversations between the faculty collaborators, the assignment was collaboratively revised to both develop and assess these learning outcomes.

Of particular note, in the authors' context there is material and structural support for giving this time to the collaboration in two forms. First, librarians at the authors' institution have faculty status and access to tenure. This status comes with both privileges and responsibilities, which directly contribute to faculty librarians' freedom to protect time for the level of collaboration described in this case study. This represents an ideal in terms of faculty librarians having the autonomy to structure their time to prioritize pedagogical collaborations like those described in this report. At the authors' institution, the results of this kind of collaboration (e.g., improved student learning and building faculty relationships) are weighted and valued in evaluations of the librarian's professional work, so librarians are empowered to reserve time to support this work.



Second, monetary support in the form of the \$1,000 Information Literacy Stipend incentivized for the course faculty of the partnership the giving of time above and beyond what might typically be expected between a librarian and course instructor. The authors acknowledge that while faculty status for librarians at the institution is a positive condition, and while the stipend presents a positive incentive for the course faculty in the collaboration, the fact that the stipend does not also go to the librarian shows that in this case the ideal – where librarians' time is valued (in a monetary sense) equal to that of course faculty – is not always the reality. This tension corroborates the study findings of Julien and Pecoskie that asymmetrical relationships between librarians and course faculty, in which the course faculty is said to offer the “gift of time” to the collaboration while the librarian's time is not similarly acknowledged, are a barrier to successful collaboration in support of students' information literacy development within the disciplines.<sup>20</sup>

Despite this tension, in the authors' experience, there remain significant positives that came from the stipend incentive that supported the collaboration. The funding guidelines for stipends require the librarian and course faculty to consult and use the ACRL *Framework* as a resource in the collaboration, thus incentivizing not only collaboration but also shared engagement with the information literacy discourse of the field of librarianship. The value of this incentive for the library is that information literacy will be collaboratively integrated into particular courses moving forward, seeding the curriculum with information literacy outcomes and assessment with each new partnership between course faculty and librarian. Moreover, through this stipend initiative and the time for pedagogical collaboration it creates, the course faculty experiences the value of collaboration with a librarian, engages the librarian's expertise in information literacy pedagogy, and communicates

that value and expertise via word-of-mouth to their disciplinary colleagues.

#### *Sharing Expertise through Scaffolding*

Scaffolding in the context of this collaboration refers to the process of starting with a single, summative assessment and breaking it into smaller formative assessments spread over time that intentionally build on each other with the goal of making explicit for students their own learning at each stage of the project. Prior to revising the Rehabilitation Resource Report, students were given basic instructions on a handout when the assignment was first introduced and then weeks later the final paper was turned in and graded with a rubric. Students were expected to accomplish on their own all of the research tasks required to write the report, which often resulted in students engaging the research process piecemeal. For example, students would often conduct the local site visit interview at a time determined by convenience, after which they would find the three required peer-reviewed evidence-based research articles about their topic, just before commencing the writing-synthesis part of the project. In this scenario, students' engagement with the rehabilitation literature does not inform and shape the content of their site visit interviews as the assignment intends it to.

However, through collaboration between the librarian and rehabilitation educator, a more structured and layered approach to the assignment was developed through which expertise at all levels was shared. In the revised assignment (Appendix A), scaffolded steps now require students to complete the project in stages and offer checkpoints for students so their course instructor can confirm they are on the right track with their research. Assessment now moves beyond the use of a single summative assessment at the culmination of the project to a number of formative assessments through the regular submission of lower-stakes work documenting the students'



research process, accompanied by regular review and feedback by the instructor, turning the project as a whole into a dialogue over time between instructor, student, and librarian.

Once the decision was made to scaffold the learning tasks across the timeline of the assignment, the amount of time given within the course by all parties increased: the course instructor who invited these pedagogical interventions, the students whose learning these interventions are meant to enhance, and the librarian who helped develop and implement these interventions. For the course instructor, the time needed to grade and assess student work on the assignment increased, both in terms of the volume of work submitted by students and the volume of feedback required by the instructor. For students, their time given to completing the scaffolded phases of the project is now ensured through the multiple low stakes assessments that culminate in a successful final paper. Regular, formative assessment is more time-consuming than a single summative assessment, but the investment of time pays off through improved student learning with repeated opportunities for expert guidance and feedback to students.

The course instructor also revised the semester schedule to allot a 75-minute class meeting for the information literacy workshop facilitated by the librarian, a workshop that the librarian in turn needed to dedicate time to prepare, develop, and deliver. In doing so, the particular expertise of the librarian in the areas of research inquiry and database searching was invited into the course in a tangible and traceable way. The librarian designed the lesson to help students better understand what it means for articles in the rehabilitation literature to be peer-reviewed and evidence-based. By connecting the research skills needed for the assignment to bigger information literacy concepts (e.g., Research as Inquiry, Scholarship as Conversation, etc.), the conditions for learning transfer were set. The librarian also shared with students her expertise

in conducting an academic literature review through the relevant disciplinary databases subscribed to by the library. The rehabilitation educator was present for the information literacy workshop to provide discipline-specific examples, bringing her disciplinary expertise to the research process introduced and modeled by the librarian. This helped the students to see the entire process of the assignment laid out in tasks that build on each other and to demonstrate the link between the literature and the required site visit, two learning outcomes which were lost on students prior to the pedagogical revisions made to the assignment.

To further build in formative scaffolding and assessment, the librarian and rehabilitation educator collaborated to develop two worksheets, Worksheet I and Worksheet II (Appendix B), to assist students with identifying relevant articles, summarizing their content, preparing their citations, and developing literature-based interview questions for the site visits. These tasks were always a part of the intended learning outcomes of the assignment but were in need of added supports to make their importance and purpose explicit to students. The worksheets were introduced during the information literacy workshop, and then completed and submitted through the university's learning management system at regular intervals during the semester. The course instructor reviewed the chosen articles for relevance and commented on the proposed interview questions, if necessary guiding the student to revise or go in a different direction with their topic of inquiry. These new check-in opportunities between novice (student) and expert (teacher) ensured that formative learning was taking place. Furthermore, this also provided the opportunity for the course instructor to refer the student back to the librarian for additional assistance should the student be struggling to access the literature. All of these changes proved to strengthen the quality of



work students produced at each stage of the assignment.

### *Sharing Expertise through Reflection*

The importance of reflection to effective information literacy teaching and learning is well documented in the literature.<sup>21</sup> Reflection took place at multiple points in this collaborative project, both between the authors during the assignment revision and assessment and by the students while completing the assignment. This mirrors Booth's emphasis on intentionally examining all of the elements of instruction—learner, context, content, and educator—in successfully developing an effective reflective teaching practice, where the presence of reflection at all levels of the pedagogical collaboration is essential to its success.<sup>22</sup> The scaffolding the authors built into the redesigned assignment necessitates reflection because it facilitates students relying on previously constructed knowledge earlier in the assignment's timeline of required tasks. By completing Worksheets I and II, including database searching and engagement with the literature, students were set up to now have points of reference in the evidence-based literature to reflect upon in order to develop focused, intentional site visit interview questions.

The students then visited their chosen community program or organization with their interview questions related to three rehabilitation research studies they found in the literature and documented in their worksheets. Through connections made between the literature and interview questions, reflection on their previously developed understanding became integral to both the site visit and the synthesis of findings that followed. After this information gathering process about their topic of inquiry, students wrote a comprehensive paper following a provided outline describing how the theoretical literature relates to the services provided by the actual community program they visited.

Through this writing-synthesis, they demonstrate their understanding of rehabilitation interventions and theory and the ways it informs real world application, one of the central learning outcomes of the assignment. They also present the information orally to the class, providing yet another opportunity for the reflective communication of research results among peers. Each element was graded (Worksheet I, Worksheet II, and final paper) to add investment from students and offer multiple opportunities for instructor feedback throughout the assignment. This feedback was a reflective tool designed to give students a chance to see engagement with the literature modeled by their course instructor with disciplinary expertise in the field they are studying.

Additionally, a reflection component was incorporated at the end of the course which asked students to respond to four questions about their learning experience in completing the assignment (Appendix C). These questions were designed to reinforce metacognitively the students' learning related to the concepts from the ACRL *Framework* that were foregrounded by the redesigned assignment. The student reflection questions culminating the assignment helped students connect these information literacy concepts to the rehabilitation counseling field of practice, in much the same way the faculty collaborators did during the initial meetings in support of the assignment revision process. By so doing, students combined their developing expertise in both rehabilitation counseling and information literacy into a single integrated learning experience.

Reflection was an essential characteristic of the partnership between librarian and rehabilitation educator at all stages of the collaboration. In the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm put forth by the Society of Jesus for Jesuit educators and institutions, *reflection* is one of five components integral to an education that leads to learners who engage in action with a purpose.<sup>23</sup> Reflection



connects *experience* to *action* in a learning cycle situated within both the *context* of learning and the *evaluation* of progress toward learning goals. For the authors, working at a Jesuit institution has led to the centrality of reflection in their teaching toolkit, where each meeting in support of the collaboration consisted of persistent and ongoing conversation and translation of pedagogical and research strategies between their respective fields of expertise. Reflection within the redesigned assignment components, at the culmination of the student research project, and between the teaching partners at every stage of the collaboration is an essential vehicle for sharing expertise at all levels and supporting student learning through a mindful approach to pedagogy.

Reflection on the part of the faculty collaborators was essential to the assessment component of the project as well. For example, through the grading and assessment process, the course instructor noticed a redundancy of content within student submissions of Worksheets I and II. In the authors' meeting at the end of the semester, this was discussed, and through this reflective process they decided to revise Worksheet II so that it is more distinct from Worksheet I. The revised Worksheet II would ask students to more intentionally engage their chosen articles in order to draft interview questions for their site visits, rather than partially repeat information already captured in Worksheet I. The importance of reflection to the assessment cycle, through which positive changes are made to course materials and pedagogy, is clear.

### Results and Discussion

In this section, results of the collaboration are described from the perspectives of both the rehabilitation educator and librarian including perceived successes and challenges. Assignment learning outcomes related to information literacy and rehabilitation counseling are compre-

hensively presented and mapped to relevant information literacy concepts from the ACRL *Framework*. Student experiences are given voice through summary of their received responses to the reflection questions posed at the culmination of the assignment.

From the point of view of the rehabilitation educator of the partnership, the revised assignment was much more successful in meeting the intended learning outcomes than in previous semesters. The students' final papers showed significantly more consistency with the quality and relevance of the chosen rehabilitation literature. Students also wrote about the connections between the literature and the local rehabilitation service provider in a much more informed way. Additionally, the use of the two worksheets and scaffolded timeline increased student/faculty interactions about literature and relevant community rehabilitation providers. In these ways, while acknowledging the challenge of prioritizing the time needed to develop and improve pedagogy in a successful ongoing collaboration with the faculty librarian, the impact of the collaboration on student learning in the course and through the assignment was significant and well worth the investment of time needed to sustain it.

From the point of view of the librarian of the partnership, this collaboration was emblematic of the opportunity created by the ACRL *Framework* and the way it grounds and contextualizes information literacy teaching and learning. Creating and protecting space to talk about the concepts in the ACRL *Framework* and connecting them to the research practices needed in future human services professionals benefitted all parties because of its demonstrated impact on students and their learning. The librarian shared her expertise in the areas of pedagogy and outcomes-based assessment with her rehabilitation educator partner through direct meetings between collaborators, the redesign of learning activities for students, and working with students



directly in the classroom. As a result, the rehabilitation educator grew to understand the value of working with a librarian. Challenges included acknowledging that although many of the conditions for successful collaboration exist at the authors' institution (e.g., faculty status for librarians), certain things such as monetary incentive to invest the time needed for this kind of collaboration to flourish only exist for the course faculty in the partnership, not the librarian. Despite this reality, from the librarian's perspective, the investment of time needed to see the positive re-

sults in both student learning and faculty relationship building was enabled in large part by her faculty status, and ultimately, indeed worth it.

A key component of the collaboration was to identify together specific assignment learning outcomes related to information literacy and rehabilitation counseling. To this end, outcomes were developed and mapped to the relevant information literacy concept from the ACRL Framework.<sup>24</sup> (Table 1)

**Table 1. Assignment learning outcomes mapped to information literacy concepts**

Assignment Learning Outcome	Information Literacy Concepts
Students analyzed their topics of inquiry in order to generate disciplinary search terms used to strategically search for appropriate articles in the databases.	Research as Inquiry Searching as Strategic Exploration
Students increased knowledge of and ability to read and utilize rehabilitation literature.	Research as Inquiry Scholarship as Conversation Searching as Strategic Exploration
Students increased their ability to understand rehabilitation interventions and theory and the ways it informs real world application.	Information Has Value Scholarship as Conversation
Students increased their confidence in contacting rehabilitation service providers.	Information Has Value Scholarship as Conversation
Students increased their ability to communicate with rehabilitation service providers about evidence-based practices from the literature.	Scholarship as Conversation
Students increased knowledge about the wide variety of rehabilitation services.	Information Has Value
Students completed the project in logical stages along an appropriate timeline.	Research as Inquiry



By working through the scaffolded assignment components, students improved not only their technical research and writing-synthesis skills, but also their understanding of the information literacy concepts identified in *Table 1* and their relevance to rehabilitation counseling practice. Students were given multiple opportunities throughout the revised assignment timeline to research their topics through a process of inquiry (Research as Inquiry), develop and deploy strategies of searching and evaluation shaped by previous and new understandings (Searching as Strategic Exploration), understand the value of evidence-based research within rehabilitation counseling practice (Information Has Value), and contribute to discourse confidently and ethically both in their site visit interviews and in their Rehabilitation Resource Report papers (Scholarship as Conversation). For the authors, the positive evidence of collaboration leading to effective teaching of the ACRL *Framework's* information literacy concepts is clear.

Student responses to the reflection questions posed at the end of the assignment included comments on the scaffolded elements of the assignment, specifically the newly created worksheets and their positive impact on the overall writing process. The worksheets helped students maintain a record of their research with summaries and citations they then applied directly to their papers during the writing-synthesis process. They also described how the in-depth work with the literature facilitated by the worksheets helped them to be more organized, informed, and prepared, which in turn helped them to feel more confident communicating with rehabilitation providers on the site visit. An unexpected outcome was the impact it had on some of the students' career development. In one example, working with the literature in this methodical way allowed the student to have a more comprehensive conversation with the local service provider thereby helping the student to

have a better understanding of the field in general and the evidence-based practices that are used or not used locally by rehabilitation providers. Evidence of students beginning to acquire a disposition toward inquiry and informed practice was documented in their responses.

### Implications for Research and Practice

The collaboration described in this article demonstrates the benefits of a librarian / course faculty partnership in increasing student information literacy and its implications for developing human services professionals. The strong foundation of unique areas of expertise shared between the collaborators provided the basis for innovative pedagogical strategies (i.e., time, scaffolding, and reflection) to take shape. Recent evidence in the rehabilitation literature from Sherman, et al. suggests that evidence-based practice which relies on connecting theory to practice in the field remains a cornerstone in the rehabilitation professions that is still often misunderstood among subject matter experts and practitioners.<sup>25</sup> The authors of the case study presented here propose collaboration in rehabilitation education to develop students' information literacy as a key component to strengthening desired learning outcomes for evidence-based practice in future human services professionals. More research in both the information literacy and rehabilitation education fields is needed to further explore and develop these collaborative practices and their positive relationship to connecting theory to practice in students preparing to enter the health professions.

Finding the time to be reflective practitioners can be a challenge when resources are scarce. It is suggested that librarians with curricular and disciplinary liaison roles advocate for dedicated time to explore and develop faculty relationships around information literacy learning outcomes and the pedagogical interventions needed to sustain them. While faculty status for librarians was a key factor of success in protecting



time to collaborate at the authors' institution, they acknowledge this condition is not in place at all libraries, so efforts must be made to articulate the case for collaboration as an impactful way to improve information literacy student learning. To this end, Ivey calls for the use of student learning assessment evidence in support of librarian / course faculty collaborations when she says, ". . . if a case is to be made for collaborative teaching partnerships between librarians and academics, and the development of information literacy programs, evidence of how these partnerships and programs can increase students' information literacy is crucial."<sup>26</sup>

The framework for collaboration presented here requires intentionality to allow for the creativity necessary to explore possible areas of course and assignment revision focused on meeting the learning goals of all stakeholders. However, it is also essential that there is dedicated time for reflection. This ensures proper assessment is taking place, which is important because evidence that learning outcomes are being met can also serve as evidence to advocate for the value of this level of collaboration between librarians and course faculty. The ultimate outcome is for undergraduate students to increase their proficiency by developing their information literacy, allowing for a stronger ability to connect theory to practice both now and in their future endeavors, and creating a foundation for them to become ethical and competent evidence-based practitioners. The authors hope that this framework for collaboration presents a foundation for continued growth of librarian / course faculty partnerships designed to increase the information literacy of undergraduate students.

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<sup>10</sup> Ivey, "Information literacy," 102.

<sup>11</sup> Julien and Pecoskie, "Librarians' experiences of the teaching role," 151.

<sup>12</sup> Andrea Baer, *Information Literacy and Writing Studies in Conversation: Reenvisioning Library-Writing Program Connections* (Sacramento: Library Juice Press, 2016), 141.

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<sup>14</sup> Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2015), <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>.

<sup>15</sup> ACRL, *Framework for Information Literacy*, Appendix 1.

<sup>16</sup> CRCC, *Code of Professional Ethics*.

<sup>17</sup> ACRL, *Framework for Information Literacy*.

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<sup>19</sup> ACRL, *Framework for Information Literacy*.

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<sup>24</sup> ACRL, *Framework for Information Literacy*.

<sup>25</sup> Susan Sherman, Roy Del Valle, Fong Chan, Trenton J. Landon, and Michael J. Leahy, "Contemporary perceptions of evidence-based practices in rehabilitation counseling," *Journal of Rehabilitation* 84, no. 4 (2018): 4-12.

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## Appendix A: Redesigned Assignment Guidelines

### CHS 342 Rehabilitation Resource Report Instructions & Guidelines

**Due Date – November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Step 1.** Select a service/intervention resource available to individuals with disabilities and their families in the [Region Redacted] community. Due Thursday 10/19

**Step 2.** Meet with [Librarian Name and Title Redacted]  
Thursday 10/19 at [Room Number Redacted]

**Step 3.** Research your service/resource to find three related peer-reviewed journal articles about the service/intervention you've selected. **Submit Research Project Worksheet I- DUE 10/26**

**Step 4.** Research the service/resource on-line **and** in person (personal visit or phone call). Gather information. Here is a list of questions for you to get started... you may want to include other questions that relate specifically to the articles you read...

**Submit Research Project Worksheet II – Due 11/14**

- (a) what does the service entail?
- (b) who are the primary customers/clients including age and disability issue?
- (c) are there other services in the area like this?
- (d) is there a cost for the service?
- (e) how do people access the service? Do they need a referral?
- (f) How many people do they provide services to annually?
- (g) what other service providers do they work together with?

**Step 5.** Write...

A potential outline would include

- Introduction (what service/resource you selected, how you got information, etc. )
- The Service (describe the service/resource using the information you found in step 2)
- The Wider Rehabilitation World (briefly describe the literature you found- be sure to cite any sources you use – a paragraph per article)
- Conclusion (Pull it all together and write and how the literature relates/or not to the actual service you found in this community and any other summary information)
- References (be sure to include all references **[in APA format!]** any website you use to get information on your service/resource, as well as the textbook and journal articles you use)
- Your report should be between 6-10 pages and in full APA format

**Grading Rubric - This paper is worth 25% of your grade - 25 points.**

Your paper will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Topic Proposal	2pts
Worksheet I	4pts
Worksheet II	4pts
Paper	<u>15pts</u>
Total	25pts

(1) Content – 8pts (a clear, accurate, and complete description of the service/resource including a brief description of three related peer-reviewed articles and how they relate to what you found in this community)

(2) Organization – 5pts (purpose of paper is clearly stated, structure of the paper is easy to follow, ideas flow smoothly from one section to another)

(3) Mechanics- 2pts (APA style is used consistently and appropriately, citations are used and are correct APA format, paper is free of grammatical and spelling errors.



## Appendix B: Worksheets I and II

### CHS 342 Rehabilitation Resource Report Worksheet I

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Service/Resource Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the local service or resource have an official website used to communicate its services and interventions to prospective individuals in need of those services? If so, record the URL here:

\_\_\_\_\_

Using the site navigation of the website for the local service or resource, conduct preliminary research about the types of interventions, services, treatments, and other relevant offerings it provides. Record here what you find out:

Your next step is to find out what the professional rehabilitation literature has to say about these interventions, services, treatments, etc. To do this, you will use the Library's databases to find **peer reviewed, evidence-based articles** that will shape your understanding of these things.

Use this space to **brainstorm possible search terms** for finding these articles, using the information you found on the website of the local service or resource:



**CHS 342 Rehabilitation Resource Report  
Worksheet I**

Using the databases ProQuest Nursing and Allied Health and CINAHL with Full Text (both found on the Databases by Subject: Counseling and Human Services page), identify three peer-reviewed, evidence-based articles that deepen your understanding of the interventions, services, treatments, etc. provided by your local service or resource.

Collect the APA citation for each article, and summarize the main findings of the article below.

Article 1:

Article 2:

Article 3:



**CHS 342 Rehabilitation Resource Report  
Worksheet II**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Service/Resource Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

The goal for this phase of your research is to use the **peer reviewed, evidence-based** articles you found for Worksheet I to shape the questions you will ask on-the-ground when you visit your local service or resource.

For each article, copy again the APA citation as well as your summary of its findings from Worksheet I, and then **draft a question you could ask on your site visit that builds on the findings in the article.**

A possible template for such a question is: **Research conducted by [article author(s)] found that [summary of finding] about [service or intervention provided by local resource]. How does [local service or resource] address this same thing?**

Article 1 -- APA Citation, Summary of Findings, and Question:

Article 2 -- APA Citation, Summary of Findings, and Question:



**CHS 342 Rehabilitation Resource Report  
Worksheet II**

Article 3 -- APA Citation, Summary of Findings, and Question:

List below the other questions you will ask on your site visit. The answers you record to these questions and the questions drafted above will be used as a valuable source of information in your final Resource Report.





## Appendix C: Student Reflection Questions

### Information Literacy Reflection Prompt

*Please reflect on your work on the Rehabilitation Resource Report and respond to the following questions:*

In what ways did the process of researching the peer-reviewed, evidence-based scholarly and professional literature prepare you for your local rehabilitation resource site visit? (consider the library class, worksheets I and II, and the development of questions)

What was the most interesting or surprising thing you learned from the articles you incorporated into your Rehabilitation Resource Report?

Was there a relationship between the depth of research you pursued and your level of confidence when interacting with the rehabilitation professional(s) on your site visit? How so?

If applicable, how might the research you did for this class inform your future as a practicing human service professional?

**Please submit your reflection to Librarian [Name and Email Address Redacted], and your instructor [Name and Email Address Redacted], no later than Monday, December 11, 2017.**

