21st Century Assessment Planning for Educators (Project CAPE)

21st Century Assessment Planning for Educators (Project CAPE) will establish a working relationship among the University at Albany—the lead applicant—Department of Information Studies, School of Education, and the Association for the Cooperative Advancement of Science and Education by bringing them together to collaboratively develop, and then jointly offer, an online graduate course related to assessment and evaluation best practices targeted primarily for pre-service School Library Media Specialists (SLMS). This project will begin in July, 2013, and continue until June, 2014.

Researchers in the field of school librarianship are calling for SLMS to be trained in assessment to enable them to step up as educational leaders (Harada, 2003, 2007; Harada & Yoshina, 2006; Hughes-Hassell & Harada, 2007; Zmuda & Harada, 2008). Fredrick (Fredrick, 2011) recommends that SLMS become part of the school conversation on assessment and use “the tools and practices available to assess and reflect on the work done and show efficacy in the school program” (p. 23). Fredrick’s list of tools include reflection, building an action plan, using Web 2.0 tools to collect evidence and sharing what is learned.

The skills developed by participants in the developed course would enable SLMS and classroom teachers to collaborate more effectively when identifying learning outcomes, designing instruction and developing assessment plans. These activities will enable educators to understand better the learning needs of their students, to target instruction, and to justify the impact and ultimate the value of their efforts. The intended outcomes of the project are to:

1. Establish a collaborative working relationship amongst the Department of Information Studies, the School of Education, and the Association for the Cooperative Advancement of Science and Education.
2. Identify critical capabilities related to educational assessment & evaluation.
3. Create an assessment and evaluation course reflecting those capabilities to be offered jointly by DIST and SOE online in Fall 2014.
4. Enable SLMS and teachers to align their curriculum with an assessment plan to serve as strong evidence that their instructional practice adds value to students’ learning.
5. Enable SLMS to collaborate more effectively with and provide instructional support for classroom teachers.
The direct effect will be to bring together four primary team members and will involve the assistance of approximately 10 other individuals over the life of the planning grant. While beyond the immediate scope of this grant– our intention is to follow up with a full grant proposal in 2014– starting in fall 2014, the course prepared under this grant will be available to the 70+ SLMS students at the University at Albany as well as any additional students from the School of Education wishing to take the course. Ultimately, the course will be made available to the larger SLMS training community as a packaged learning module.