



PRESERVATION EDUCATION CURRICULUM



NORTHEAST
DOCUMENT
CONSERVATION
CENTER

CLASS 2 LESSON PLAN

Context for the Cultural Record

Suggested Readings for Students

The Importance of Context

Belanger, Terry. "Descriptive Bibliography." In Jean Peters, ed. *Book Collecting: A Modern Guide*. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1977, pp. 97–115.

This article is one of the very best and most accessible introductions to the field of analytic bibliography. This term encompasses historical, descriptive, and textual bibliography and concerns the "whole study of the physical book." Director of the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia, Belanger is at the forefront of bibliographic scholarship today.

McCorison, Marcus. "Statement on Preservation." *Abbey Newsletter* 14, no. 5 (1990): 84–85.

This is a brief statement from the President and Librarian of the American Antiquarian Society on the importance of retaining "physical evidence": "But the object itself consists of cultural evidence, exhibiting as much about the traditions of the period and place in which it was produced, and, in some instances, the object is of greater moment than its content." It recounts scholar Cathy Davidson's visit in 1984 when she gazed in awe at the collection of diverse copies of *Charlotte Temple*, "each one embodying/reflecting/creating its own history of the book in American culture."

Winkler, Karen J. "In Electronic Age, Scholars Are Drawn to Study of Print." *Chronicle of Higher Education* (July 14, 1993): A6–A8.

This excellent overview of the emergence of the field of "book history" discusses many aspects of its scholarly purview, describes the work of several important scholars, and presents a basic bibliography.

Physical Aspects of Context

Frost, Gary. "A Brief History of Western Bookbinding, Without One Mention of Decoration." *Abbey Newsletter* 2, no. 4 (February 1979): 39–43.

Perhaps the best short introduction to the history of book structures, giving explanations and examples from the third to the 20th century. The discussion is helped immeasurably by Frost's clear illustrations.

"Hand Bookbindings from Special Collections in the Princeton University Library: Plain and Simple to Grand and Glorious." Princeton University Library, 2004.
http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/hb/hb.html

Very possibly the best Web site on the history of binding, this discusses the design and structure of bindings from the Middle Ages to the present. Good attention is paid to the relationship between book and audience.

"Publishers' Bindings Online, 1815–1930: The Art of Books." University of Alabama, 2005.
<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/index.html>

This significant collection of over 4,000 decorative bindings in the University of Alabama's and University of Wisconsin's collections provides images and essays that place the history of bookbinding within a historical context. The project also provides an excellent list of resources, including a "Glossary of Publishers' Bindings-Related Terms" and a "Master Bibliography of Print and Online Resources."

Preservation of Context

Cloonan, Michèle Valerie. "W(h)ither Preservation?" *Library Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (April 2001): 231–44.

Cloonan's article offers a refreshingly candid look at the current trends in preservation programs, which, because of the emerging problems of electronic formats, emphasize only technical aspects and solutions. "Preservation must be approached not only as a set of technical solutions to technical problems but also as a more complex concept that includes social dimensions." Cloonan thus establishes a wider "context" for preservation decisions and activities.

Stewart, Eleanor. "Special Collections Conservation." In *Preservation: Issues and Planning*, edited by Paul N. Banks and Roberta Pilette. Chicago: American Library Association, 2000, pp. 285–306.

Stewart discusses both the broad perspective of the intellectual preservation of the cultural artifact and the role of the conservator in making decisions and carrying out treatment plans. It is thus a good combination of the theoretical and the practical. "[The conservator and the curator] each has the obligation to ensure the object survives for as long as possible and with as little alteration as possible."