



# PRESERVATION EDUCATION CURRICULUM



NORTHEAST  
DOCUMENT  
CONSERVATION  
CENTER

CLASS 6 LESSON PLAN

## Collections Care

### The Lesson

#### Part I: Housing Collections—Boxes and Enclosures (30 minutes)

##### A. General characteristics of enclosures

1. Chemically stable enclosures
  - i. Terminology (e.g., “archival,” “acid-free,” “lignin-free,” “buffered,” “pH”)
2. Custom vs. standard enclosures
  - i. Commercial binders
  - ii. Conservators
  - iii. Commercial library and archival suppliers
  - iv. When to use custom vs. standard enclosures

##### B. Storage enclosures for book, pamphlet, and document collections (include scrapbooks)

##### C. Storage enclosures for oversize materials (e.g., maps, bound newspapers, oversize books or scrapbooks, oversize documents)

##### D. Storage enclosures for multimedia materials (e.g., still images on film, motion picture film, sound recordings, audio and video magnetic media, optical media)

##### E. Microenvironments

Students should be introduced to the variety of enclosures available and given guidelines for choosing the proper type of enclosure for the material being enclosed. Students can be asked to list common terms (such as “archival,” “lignin-free”) often encountered in supplier catalogs, as an introduction to a definition of various terms used to describe storage enclosures. The consequences of using poor-quality enclosures should be discussed (see activity below), and the desired characteristics of chemically stable paper and plastic enclosures should be identified for various types of collections.

#### ***In-Class Activities***

- Using a slideshow, or sample objects, have students identify what is wrong with each picture or item (e.g., acidic enclosures, materials slumping in cabinets or boxes, damage from adhesives, enclosures that do not provide sufficient support).
- Share examples of different protective enclosures, and place sample items in enclosures, demonstrating how much material should be placed in different types of enclosures (e.g., book boxes, folders).
- Compare and critique products from different preservation supply vendors, noting that judgment must be exercised to purchase the right product for the materials needing enclosure.

Sample vendors:

- Brodart, <http://www.shopbrodart.com/default.us.aspx>
- Gaylord Brothers, <http://www.gaylord.com/>
- Metal Edge, <http://www.metaledgeinc.com/>
- University Products, <http://www.universityproducts.com>

## **Part II: Holdings and Stacks Maintenance (30 minutes)**

A. General housekeeping

B. Holdings maintenance (archives)

1. Replacing acidic enclosures
2. Replacing damaging fasteners
3. Proper shelving practices (e.g., books, document boxes, oversize/rolled items)
4. Preservation photocopying of acidic/unstable items
5. Identifying/storing/treating damaged records
6. Dusting and cleaning archival collections
7. Selecting collections for holdings maintenance (e.g., all activities cannot be carried out for all collections)

C. Stacks maintenance (libraries)

1. Proper shelving procedures (e.g, oversize materials, spine-down shelving, use of bookends, shifting stacks)
2. Cleaning collections
3. Temporary shelving for reserves/holds
4. Use of book drops and book trucks
5. Identification of damaged items

### ***In-Class Activities***

- Ask the class to help outline on the blackboard the elements for a holdings maintenance program and a stacks maintenance program. Discuss the differences in collection maintenance in libraries and archives.
- Use a slide show (or sample items) to have students identify poorly shelved items and discuss how to correct the situation. Demonstrate proper shelving techniques.

## **Part III: Storage Furniture and Facilities (30 minutes)**

A. Types of storage facilities

1. High-density
2. Movable compact shelving
3. Standard book shelves

B. Environments

1. Cool: paper based and general library materials
2. Cold: film based
  - i. Packing for cold storage

C. Specialized storage furniture and shelving

1. Shelving for archival boxes

2. Flat storage for oversize flat paper materials (e.g., map cases, storage for oversize boxes)
3. Shelving for multimedia collections

D. Reading room supplies

1. Cradles
2. Book snakes

***In-Class Activities***

- Share-Pair—Ask students working in pairs to recall proper environmental conditions (covered in Classes 4 and 5) for different formats found in library and archival collections. Share their answers with the class.
- Use a show-and-tell strategy to share different examples of cradles and book snakes.

**Part IV: Staff and User Education (1 hour)**

A. Handling library and archival materials

1. During acquisition, processing, and moving between buildings/across campus
2. General handling: loading book trucks, checking in/out, shelving, removing from drawers
3. General care: food and drink policy, photocopying guidelines/instruction
4. Interlibrary loan (ILL) issues
5. Health and safety issues
6. Handling archival collections

B. Handling multimedia collections

1. Still images on film
2. Motion picture film
3. Sound recordings
4. Audio and video magnetic media
5. Optical media

C. How to establish and promulgate policies and practices for use of collections

1. Educating staff
2. Educating users
3. Working with departments throughout the institution

This section should begin with a lecture/discussion about handling materials during processing and transporting. Ask for volunteers to demonstrate general handling techniques such as loading book trucks and shelving. Show slides or pass around examples of materials damaged by food, drink, or pests. A discussion of the challenges of educating staff and users and establishing policies for use of collections should follow, with questions for structuring the discussion.

***In-Class Activities***

- Divide the class into groups and assign students to produce a handout of care and handling tips for multimedia collections. Each group could devise a different format to be vetted and shared with the rest of the class.
- Divide the class into groups and have students draft an example preservation policy and summarize their findings to the rest of class. Discuss the impact the proposed policy might have on various departments in a library or archives.

**Part V: Exhibits (30 minutes)**

## A. Basic information

1. Guidelines for identifying materials to be exhibited
2. Exhibiting surrogates
3. Length of exhibition
4. Exhibition environment (light protection, climate control)

## B. Protecting exhibited materials

1. Case design
2. Physical supports and restraints, including strapping and text block supports; supports for objects
3. Cradles
4. Mats/encapsulations

## C. Issues related to exhibition

1. Loan agreements and insurance
2. Security

***In-Class Activity***

- Group work and presentation—Each group is to brainstorm ideas for an exhibition that would highlight museum, library, or archival collections with which they are familiar. Ask them to outline the preservation issues that they must consider in planning an exhibition. Each group shares their findings with the rest of the class.

**Suggested Graded Assignments**

- Distribute sample preservation quizzes used in preservation staff and user education programs. Ask students to take the quiz and then discuss the answers and benefits of incorporating such a quiz into staff and user education programs.

Examples include the following:

- UCSD Libraries Preservation quiz,  
<http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/preservation/pquiz.html>
- Memorial Library, Mankato State University Libraries quiz,  
<http://lib.mnsu.edu/services/preservation/quiz.html>
- Devise a motto, design, or other strategy for educating users and/or staff about a preservation principle.
- Choose a collection in need of rehousing at the student's workplace or a local institution of interest. The student should describe the collection, estimate the number and type of enclosures needed, and research prices and availability.
- Evaluate existing storage furniture at the student's workplace or a local institution of interest. Determine what should be replaced and/or how current furniture could be reconfigured to improve storage conditions. Have students research furniture types and prices, and draw up a floor plan for rearranging/replacing furniture.
- Prepare a presentation on preservation basics and preservation activities to be presented to the Board of Trustees at the student's workplace or a local institution of interest.

- Ask each student to visit two separate locations that have archival materials on exhibit and evaluate them. Compare and contrast the two spaces and the exhibit techniques from the perspective of preservation.

### **Suggested Term Projects**

- Students (alone or in a group) could use the information gained from the assigned readings and lecture on collections care to design a 60-minute lesson plan for a workshop in care and handling of library/archival materials for the staff and public of different library/archival settings, such as academic, public, school, historical society, and the like. Ask each person or group to present a lesson plan to the entire class.
- Visit a museum, archives, or library exhibition and write down preservation-related observations about the exhibit. The student should sketch a floor plan of the exhibit and note the following:
  - a. Emergency exits
  - b. Smoke alarms
  - c. Fire extinguishers
  - d. Monitoring devices for environmental conditions
  - e. Security devices
  - f. Mounting and display of objects
  - g. Other items of interest

Have the student write a paper describing his or her experience in visiting the library, archives, or museum exhibition and discuss the following questions:

How can an institution exhibit its materials and provide a safe haven for them while making them available to the public? Will achieving one aim be at the expense of the other? How did the institution visited address these issues? What did it do right? What could be improved? If your library or archives were asked to contribute some of your rare holdings to an exhibit, what would be some of your concerns?