



PRESERVATION EDUCATION CURRICULUM



NORTHEAST
DOCUMENT
CONSERVATION
CENTER

CLASS 6 LESSON PLAN

Collections Care

Overview

This lesson plan explores collections care and investigates the impact of preservation programming in prolonging the life of library and archival collections. Integrating and implementing reasonable and fundamental preservation principles across an entire library or archival institution may significantly extend the lifespan of a collection. Outlining the features of a collection care program, this lesson plan will focus on staff and user education, holdings and stacks maintenance, preservation housing and storage, and proper exhibition practices. These programs together contribute to an overall comprehensive preservation stratagem aimed at safeguarding library and archival materials and providing access to these resources.

This lesson plan utilizes a series of lectures, discussions, and group work to introduce concepts of staff and user education, holdings maintenance, and exhibit work. By incorporating practical experiences through demonstrating care and handling techniques, sharing examples of protective enclosures, and encouraging students to embrace the preservation cause through group activities that focus on planning, promulgating policies, and implementing best practices, students will explore the field with a better understanding that preservation awareness goes a long way in safeguarding collections.

The lesson is divided into five parts:

Part I: Housing Collections—Boxes and Enclosures. Introduces terminology commonly used to describe enclosures and provides an overview of recommended enclosures for different types of collections, including multimedia collections.

Part II: Holdings and Stacks Maintenance. This section addresses general housekeeping issues, as well as the differences (and similarities) between holdings maintenance activities in archives and stack maintenance activities in libraries.

Part III: Storage Furniture and Facilities. This section reviews recommended environmental conditions for various types of collections (including multimedia collections), and discusses appropriate storage furniture and shelving for different types of collections. The use of high-density and compact shelving is also covered.

Part IV: Staff and User Education. This section covers basic handling procedures for library and archival collections, including multimedia collections. The challenges in educating staff and users about proper handling and other preservation issues should be emphasized.

Part V: Exhibits. Provides basic information on the preservation issues involved in exhibits. Protecting exhibited materials through the use of properly designed exhibit cases and exhibit supports is stressed, as well as protecting materials from light exposure and poor environmental conditions.