



# PRESERVATION EDUCATION CURRICULUM



NORTHEAST  
DOCUMENT  
CONSERVATION  
CENTER

CLASS 7 LESSON PLAN

## Surveys and Assessments

### The Lesson

#### Part I: Introduction to Surveys (30 minutes)

- A. Purpose of a survey
- B. Introduction to types of surveys and assessments (in brief)
  - 1. General preservation survey
  - 2. Collection survey
    - i. Item-by-item survey
    - ii. Statistical survey

This section introduces the use of preservation surveys for determining preservation program needs and for planning short- and long-term preservation priority actions. Emphasize that preservation surveys are mechanisms to measure progress over time. An institution can start with a survey to create a baseline ("this is the way things are now"), then survey again in three, five, or ten years, to determine what progress has been made in preservation activities over time. Surveys also allow comparisons to be made between institutions. (See the ARL statistics Web site at <http://www.arl.org/stats/annualsurveys/pres/index.shtml>.)

#### Part II: The General Preservation Survey (45 minutes)

- A. Preliminary planning
  - 1. Defining the purpose of the survey
  - 2. In-house survey vs. outside consultant
  - 3. Sources of funding for surveys (in brief)
- B. Topics covered in a general survey
  - 1. Mission and collecting policies
  - 2. Collection management policies
  - 3. Intellectual control of collections
  - 4. Environment (e.g., temperature, humidity, light, pollutants)
  - 5. Disaster preparedness
  - 6. Security
  - 7. Housekeeping
  - 8. Storage furniture and enclosures
  - 9. Overall condition of collections by category
  - 10. Exhibition
  - 11. Reformatting
  - 12. Conservation treatment

### C. Model survey instruments

1. NEDCC's *Assessing Preservation Needs: A Self-Survey Guide*, at <http://www.nedcc.org/resources/downloads/apnssg.pdf>. This very detailed narrative questionnaire covers a wide range of preservation topics.
2. SOLINET Disaster Prevention and Protection Checklist, at <http://www.solinet.net/>. This environmental survey tool examines the physical building for hazards and other issues that might endanger collections.
3. The California Preservation Program's *CALIPR: A collection needs assessment instrument for preservation planning*, at <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/CALIPR/>. This assessment tool uses a random sample drawn from the collection to make general recommendations about preservation activities that need to be undertaken within the collection. These include not just treatment and reformatting, but environmental control, disaster planning, and staff/user education.

This section of the lesson covers qualitative general surveys that address overall preservation issues, rather than making recommendations for specific items. Students should explore how to start thinking about a general survey, and how they can define the purpose and the process. Once an institution has determined what it wants to know, it can choose the best method for gathering that information. Students should be made aware that surveys can be done in parts rather than all at once; this approach can be particularly helpful if they are being done in-house. See CalPreservation.org's "Preservation Needs Assessment" article and Hannah Frost's "Surveying Sound Recording Collections" in [Resources for the Teacher](#) for general information about the survey process.

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

- Have students brainstorm topics that should be covered in a comprehensive general preservation planning survey.
- Through a case study or real-life institution, have students break into groups and discuss what type of survey is needed, what the institution's goals should be for a survey, how it should be conducted (e.g., in-house or outside consultant), and how it might be funded.

### **Part III: The Collection-level Survey (45 minutes)**

#### A. Preliminary planning

1. Defining the purpose of the collection survey
2. In-house survey vs. outside consultant/conservator
3. Statistical survey vs. inclusive item-by-item survey
4. Sources of funding for surveys (in brief)

#### B. Model survey instruments

1. The California Preservation Program's *CALIPR: A collection needs assessment instrument for preservation planning*, at <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/CALIPR/>. CALIPR was originally designed as a tool to aid in the management of a sample condition survey of general collections, although it has since been broadened somewhat.
2. Columbia University Libraries' *Special Collections Materials Survey Instrument*, at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/services/preservation/surveyTools.html>. This Web site provides a survey instrument that evaluates not just condition, but also level of intellectual

control and research value of the materials. A blank Microsoft Access database for data entry, along with explanatory text files, can be downloaded.

This section covers the various types of collection-level surveys, ranging from an overview survey of a particular collection by a conservator, to an item-by-item survey, to a random-sample statistical survey.

### ***In-Class Activity***

Have students classify the model survey instruments within these categories:

- Benchmark scheme: Provides a set of clearly defined levels against which to measure the adequacy or provision under each topic
- Qualitative narrative questionnaires
- Quantitative data and comparative analysis

### **Part IV: The Survey Process**

#### **(1 hour, or more if the class does a walk-through of a library facility)**

- A. Pre-survey preparation/questionnaires
- B. On-site visit (data collection): scope and methodology
- C. Report
  1. Executive summary
  2. General assessment/observations
  3. Recommendations, in priority order
  4. Conclusions
- D. Implementation of survey recommendations

This section of the lesson is best taught by reviewing the survey process using either a case study with slides or a real-life walk-through of a building. Be sure to discuss survey preparation (e.g., pre-survey questionnaires, gathering existing written policies and procedures), and begin to discuss the process of implementing survey recommendations (this will be addressed further in **Class 13: Building a Preservation Program**). *Note: if students do an actual walk-through of a library facility during class and then discuss the findings, more time will be required for this section, which can be taken from **Part II: The General Preservation Survey**.*

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

- Walk-through of a library facility with a survey instrument to fill out. Use all or part of the NEDCC self-survey guide (see [Resources for the Teacher](#)) or the SOLINET disaster prevention checklist.
- Have students brainstorm and write on the board the key components of a written survey report.
- Have students brainstorm ideas about how the library surveyed might begin implementing the recommendations and monitor progress in preservation activities over time.

**Suggested Graded Assignments**

- Compare two survey instruments for the same function and write a short paper comparing and contrasting their strengths and weaknesses.

**Suggested Term Projects**

- Conduct a general preservation survey of an institution, or a collection condition survey of a specific collection (in their home, workplace, or a nearby cultural heritage institution) and write up a report. Other activities could include developing a 30-minute presentation on the findings of the survey project and presenting it to the class, or to the staff of the institution surveyed.