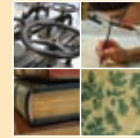




# PRESERVATION EDUCATION CURRICULUM



NORTHEAST  
DOCUMENT  
CONSERVATION  
CENTER

CLASS 8 LESSON PLAN

## Treatment Options

### The Lesson

#### **Part I: Introduction to Book Construction and Common Types of Damage (30 minutes)**

##### A. Book identification exercise

This exercise provides an opportunity for students to examine real examples of damage and challenges them to make decisions about how to address the problems presented based on their present knowledge of conservation. At the beginning of the class (or immediately following the exercise), the instructor can solicit volunteers to describe what they would do for each book and why. The exercise assumes that the instructor has access to ten books with a wide range of damage. The books could also come from library discards, used bookstores, public library sales, and the like.

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

- A ten- to 15-minute exercise examining ten books that have common damage from handling or structural problems. The exercise can be assigned as homework by leaving books in a controlled environment (e.g., student lounge or reserve desk) or be done at the start of class while waiting for late students. Give students a sheet of paper with ten numbered lines that correspond to numbered damaged books. Students examine the books quickly, either individually or in small groups, and write down what they think should be done for each volume. Decisions should be made in the context of a given library—one where the students work, one in which they would like to work, or the students' own collection. Students retain the completed list. It is not intended to be handed to the instructor.

Suggestions for options include:

- Weeding/replacement
- Library binding
- In-house repair
- Reformatting
- Special collections conservation

Typical books and damage to include in the sample:

- Volume missing one or more pages—with a note to point this out
- Volume needing hinge tightening
- Volume with more severe interior hinge problems
- Brittle paper
- Damaged cloth spine
- Broken sewing
- Damaging oversewing

19th-century binding that may have artifactual value  
Library-bound artifactual text block  
Previously poorly repaired binding  
Single volume of a multivolume set

#### B. Structure of the typical cloth case binding

1. Parts of a case binding (e.g., case, spine, boards, joint, internal hinge, text block, folio, leaf, page, pastedown, flyleaf)
2. Page attachment
  - Through the fold sewing
  - Oversewing and stab sewing
  - Adhesive—double fan, overall, burst

The structure of the typical case-bound book can be examined using printed material containing drawings and diagrams or actual examples of damaged or selectively deconstructed books. The structure of the case-bound book has changed very little since its inception around 1830 and is still used for the majority of volumes in most general collections. Begin the discussion by explaining different page attachment methods and the problems associated with each. Follow with descriptions of case construction and the attachment of the case to the text block. The weakest areas of the typical case-bound book are the hinge area (interior and exterior); damage to this area and to the spine, joints, and internal hinges should be discussed.

### **Part II: Elements of a Conservation Program (30 minutes)**

The following requirements for a conservation program and the decision-making processes are essentially the same for materials worked on in-house or sent out to a library bindery or conservator. Provide examples from the three different conservation approaches for some of the points below as they are discussed.

#### A. Policy

1. A preservation program involves all departments and is integral to library processes.
2. Policies and procedures should be developed within the context of the institution rather than in a vacuum.
3. Involve staff from various departments in discussion about materials.

#### B. Selection

1. Establish criteria for selection, create a written protocol that is understood by everyone involved in the selection process, including preservation staff, conservators, curators, and librarians. Review periodically to adjust to changes (book production, shifts in curriculum, scholarly interests, etc.).
2. Base selection criteria on type and level of use and value (long-term, short-term, exhibition).
3. Recognize that it is not possible to repair/conservate everything. Objects selected should meet the mission of the institution.

#### C. Preparation/requirements

1. Appropriate staff (adequate numbers for work required, trained to perform level of work required).
2. Dedicated, properly equipped space for work required.
3. Adequate funds available for supplies, training, and treatment.

## D. Quality control

1. Staff must have the ability to analyze library procedures.
2. Staff must have the ability to analyze finished product.

## E. Documentation

1. Forms and procedures to record and analyze expenditure of funds.
2. Statistical records of work performed (ARL or other meaningful statistics) for funding, to justify the programs, to support need for growth, and for development purposes.
3. Use technology (cataloging and bibliographic record) to note damage (at circulation desk, at point of entry with receipt or catalog staff, after treatment).
4. Description and documentation of treatments performed. Incorporate these into bibliographic record or otherwise retain as permanent record of individual objects or collections.

**Part III: Treatment Options for Circulating Collections (30 minutes)**

## A. Library binding

1. LBI Standards

## B. In-house repair—types of repairs that can be performed in-house successfully

1. Tip-ins
2. Page replacements
3. Recasing
4. Rebacking cloth cases

## C. Mass deacidification

## D. Deaccession/replacement

## E. Reformatting

## F. Rehousing with no repair (boxing, pamphlet folders, polyester film dust jackets)

**Part IV: Special Collections Conservation (30 minutes)**

## A. The basic principles of conservation

1. Do no harm
  - i. Great risk to an object when it's being worked on
  - ii. Potentially more harmful than doing nothing
  - iii. Potentially more harmful than use
  - iv. Conservators attempt to choose treatment strategies that will benefit object within the context of its importance, expected use, and so on
2. Conservative approach—save everything, retain integrity
  - i. Artifactual value
3. Less is better—follows the conservative approach
4. Reversibility
  - i. False sense of security—not all treatments can be reversed

#### 5. Compromise

- i. Often necessary to sacrifice one result for another more desired or urgently needed result (e.g., in order to retain artifactual integrity of an object, conservation treatment that would result in increased chemical and/or physical stability may not be performed)
- ii. Librarian or curatorial perspective
- iii. Conservation perspective
- iv. The librarian/curatorial and conservation perspectives may be different or the same—important to discuss desired outcome and options

Conservators, librarians, and curators may have different objectives. For ethical reasons, conservators cannot always agree to perform treatments that a librarian or curator requests. (See *AIC Code of Ethics* as well.) Dialogue between curators and conservators is essential to achieve a balance between these competing objectives. The conservator should be able to explain how a particular treatment will change or affect the object to be conserved.

#### B. Things a conservator should know

1. The history, science, and aesthetics of materials
2. The causes of deterioration and damage to materials
3. The range of methods and materials used in conservation treatment
4. Implications and probable results of treatment

For sections B through E, if everyone in the class has read Jan Paris's article, discussion of some of these points can be very brief. Note that a conservator is like a plumber or electrician in some ways:

- Both are skilled workers who need practical experience and hand skills.
- Both need to know materials and their interaction.
- Both proceed cautiously in complex situations. (*Not my plumber!*)

#### C. Things a conservator will not know

1. The value of an object, be it monetary, historical, or associational
2. How the object fits in with the rest of an institution's collections
3. How the object will be used and stored in the future

#### D. Working with a conservator

1. Many institutions may require the services of contract conservators.
2. True for those with conservators on staff and those with none. In-house conservators and preservation staff work with contract conservators because there is a need for
  - i. specialized expertise
  - ii. alternative opinions regarding treatment strategies
  - iii. staff and space to complete large or extensive projects, to complete projects in a limited time frame, to conserve oversize materials (too much, too damaged, too big)

#### E. How to find a conservator

1. Consult conservation departments of local institutions
  - i. Small field—conservators are likely to know most professionals working locally, as well as some working in other areas of the country
2. Special collections and preservation departments of libraries
  - i. Typically the library staff that would engage conservators
3. AIC Web site, <http://aic.stanford.edu/>

Additional thoughts on finding a conservator:

- Contract conservators working for the referring institution may not be appropriate for your particular project. If the conservator's primary activity is conservation of individual objects, he or she may have little or no experience surveying a large collection or providing basic stabilization for, say, a collection of 19th-century objects.
- Suggestions from AIC may include conservators working out of your geographic area. Unfortunately, referrals occasionally are for conservators working outside of the specialty you request.
- Conservators specialize. Specialty groups within AIC include Book and Paper (with specialties within this specialty), Textiles, Sculpture, Electronic Media, and so forth. One contract conservator, no matter how competent, will not be able to treat every kind of object.
- You may need to transport an object beyond your immediate geographic area to obtain the expertise required for it.

### **Part V: Treatment Options for Special Collection Materials (30 minutes)**

#### A. Treatment for objects can vary

1. No single treatment is the "right" treatment
2. Treatments to same object may be different depending on institution
  - i. Historical society
  - ii. Research library
  - iii. Art museum library
3. The intended use of object may influence conservation strategy
  - i. Heavy use—circulating library
  - ii. Exhibit only
  - iii. Primarily research
  - iv. Local interest versus national or global interest
4. Rarity or uniqueness may affect conservation approach

#### B. Paper Conservation

1. Documentation—photographic and written
2. Surface cleaning
3. Aqueous treatment
4. Chemical and light bleaching
5. Mending and lining
6. Flattening
7. Mounting/encapsulation/matting

#### C. Book Conservation

1. Collation
2. Surface cleaning, aqueous treatment, mending, and guarding
3. Sewing
4. Binding
5. Rebacking/repairing original bindings
6. Boxing/enclosures

Use images of objects including those taken before, during, and after for some treatments. Examples including a variety of objects (not just a complete treatment of a single one) should be shown to demonstrate the complexity in decision making for conservation of special collection and rare materials. In particular, objects for which a range of treatment approaches is valid based on condition, uniqueness, value to the institution, environmental conditions in storage,

intended use, and geographic location of the institution (New England vs. Washington, D.C.), and so forth will make excellent examples.

### **Suggested Graded Assignments**

- Prepare a written institutional policy for selecting materials for binding, repair, and/or conservation treatment at the student's workplace or a local institution of interest.

### **Suggested Term Projects**

- Identify materials in need of conservation treatment at the student's workplace or a local institution of interest. Research possible grant funding sources, get estimates for treatment of the materials, and write a grant proposal for their conservation treatment.