Cataloging the Curriculum Library: New Procedures for Non-Traditional Formats

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ABSTRACT. This report examines some of the technical problems of integrating a curriculum resource center into an academic library setting. Procedures for conducting an inventory of existing materials, processing multi-media and other non-print formats, and displaying and retrieving materials within a Web OPAC are discussed. An analysis of how cataloging staff can use the new ACRL standards to reshape how students and faculty access information resources is provided.

KEYWORDS. Curriculum resource center, academic library, information access, cataloging non-traditional materials, curriculum materials, partnership, department of education, Seton Hall University

INTRODUCTION

Like many other academic institutions, Seton Hall University Libraries in South Orange, New Jersey has maintained since the 1970s an

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Cataloging & Classification Quarterly, Vol. 34(4) 2002
http://www.haworthpressinc.com/store/product.asp?sku=J104

educational resources center. For much of its existence, it followed the traditional format of curriculum libraries found in an academic environment. That is to say, the main emphasis of the collection was largely print-based–textbooks, young adult and children's literature, and professional literature–although the library included audio-visual, electronic materials, graphic art aids and other kinds of resources. This kind of collection has been well described by Buttlar and Tipton (1992), Roberts (1989) and Sitter (1991). Although these authors discuss the composition of this type of collection, none focus on the difficulties of cataloging and integrating these resources into an academic library. This was true at our university as well. Our cataloging department largely dealt with these resources as extensions of our traditional cataloging function. The collection was not considered as a unique or special unit of the library. This approach was similar to the general trend in academia, which was to view curriculum collections as established, but not actively developed components of a university's educational programs.

At Seton Hall University this situation began to change in the late 1990s, when the College of Education and Human Services received a large grant from the U.S. Department of Education, entitled, "Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology." The area of the library that housed the curriculum collection was transformed into a learning center. The collection was no longer considered to be supplemental to the activities of the college, but integral to course instruction. As a result of the technological focus of the grant, the library received an infusion of multimedia CDs and other non-traditional formats. While this situation might have been normal for a school library, it was new for us as an academic institution. Almost simultaneously we were implementing Endeavor's Voyager integrated information system. Not only did this result in a high learning curve for library staff, it made us rethink the way we were handling the collection as a whole.

One of the questions we asked ourselves was whether cataloging procedures established in the past, sometimes more than a decade previously, were still valid in a Web-based environment. As the curricular library contained a rather small number of resources (approximately 4,000 items), we decided to do a physical inventory of the collection. For this we asked student workers to physically examine whether all items had received barcodes and were labeled correctly. What had started out as a rather simple procedure, proved to be quite complicated as we realized that many of these resources had been cataloged as one bibliographic record, with multiple holdings. While this made sense when these records were displayed

within a traditional card catalog (all materials were grouped together under one subject heading), the limited points of access were a detriment within a Web-based OPAC. As the students brought these items to our attention, we either recataloged them as individual items, or, if we determined that they were no longer current, deaccessioned them. Luckily in the conversion from our previous GEAC system, these curricular resources had been tagged with the location "curriculum" in the 852 field. As we became more acquainted with the functionality of the Voyager system, we realized that we could generate reports from the cataloging module that limited materials by location. This meant that not only could we generate a list of curricular resources for students and faculty, but we could actually conduct a computer-generated inventory. Our bibliographer thus was able to get a breakdown of materials by call number, publication date, and item type.

After we had completed our inventory, we began to think about how students and faculty would use the resources in the curricular library. A decision was made to interfile multimedia kits with print resources. The rationale for this was to encourage users to draw upon all resources within the library, rather than to isolate them by item type. This was especially important because the curricular library is a sizeable room that had already been segmented by activity areas. One exception was made with CDs, which, because of their small size, were placed within a special display unit. Accompanying material, such as teacher or student guides, were placed in a nearby Princeton file. As we thought further about questions of display and access we decided to allow users to check out independent units of material. For example, in the case of a multimedia kit that might contain such components as blocks, picture books, CDs, videos, and so forth, individual elements were allowed to circulate. This might allow a student teacher to check out only those items that were relevant to a particular class assignment. Luckily, the LC classification scheme is broad enough to allow a natural division of items by category. Because we made a decision to classify all children's fiction in the PZ section, books that were essential for certain assignments, such as Newberry or Caldecott winners could be grouped roughly in the same location. Because we could generate a list of titles, our bibliographer could easily request a report of fiction titles for comparison against subject bibliographies. Although we made an effort to make sure all titles that had won awards were tagged as such in the 500 field of a bibliographic record, this was only valuable for Web OPAC display or keyword retrieval.

HOW TO PROCESS AND CATALOG NON-TRADITIONAL MATERIALS SUCH AS MULTIMEDIA ITEMS AND KITS AND A PRINT LITERATURE SECTION

An essential service of the Curriculum Resource Center (CRC) is to support the teacher education program, a clientele that consists mainly of teachers or education majors working in the public school system. Thus the CRC collection is comprised of various educational tools and resources. The original collection included textbooks in all subject areas for grades kindergarten through twelve, *The World Book Encyclopedia*, bibliographies of children's books, guides to creating lesson plans, and a number of non-print items such as posters, pictures, flashcards, geoboards, maps, hand puppets and a small theater. However, because of its partnership with the Department of Education, and in keeping with its mission to serve the teacher education program, the CRC also benefited from the U.S. Department of Education grant. The Center was updated and expanded with new dynamic resources to meet the growing needs of this new generation of education professionals.

The Curriculum Resource Center is also equipped with two state-of-the-art wireless computers with Internet access, a proxima for group presentations, new research monographs in the field of teaching, textbooks and exercise workbooks in mathematics, social studies, languages, the sciences, critical thinking and library research, and educational CD-ROM software spanning multiple subjects and themes for all grade levels. It also includes innovative, interactive multimedia classroom kits. The CRC was also the recipient of a multitude of hands-on learning tools and brightly colored mathematical manipulatives such as geoboards, cuisenaire rods, pattern blocks, base ten blocks, decimal cubes, algeblocks, fraction circles, fraction bars, fraction rings, simulated U.S. currency, dice, clocks, simple scales, geosolids, and a graduated cylinder set. In a collaborative effort with the teaching faculty, the CRC was also designed for classroom use, particularly information literary instruction.

However, such an undertaking does not come about without some inherent challenges. The cataloging of the software and classroom kits, in particular, proved problematic. For example, there was great inconsistency among the OCLC records regarding the labeling of the format of the software in the 245 deliminator h indicator; such as

interactive multimedia
computer program

electronic resource
machine-readable data file
computer file

In this particular instance we decided upon the 'computer file' designation.

Our University Library classifies its collection using the Library of Congress Classification Scheme. Assigning a call number to these items was not very difficult since they are classified by subject and by educational level:

LB1525 Reading–primary education
LB1573 Reading–elementary education
LB1632 Reading–secondary education

However, the Library of Congress subject headings available to describe the software is varied and confusing, especially since the terms are almost interchangeable. These include such terms as:

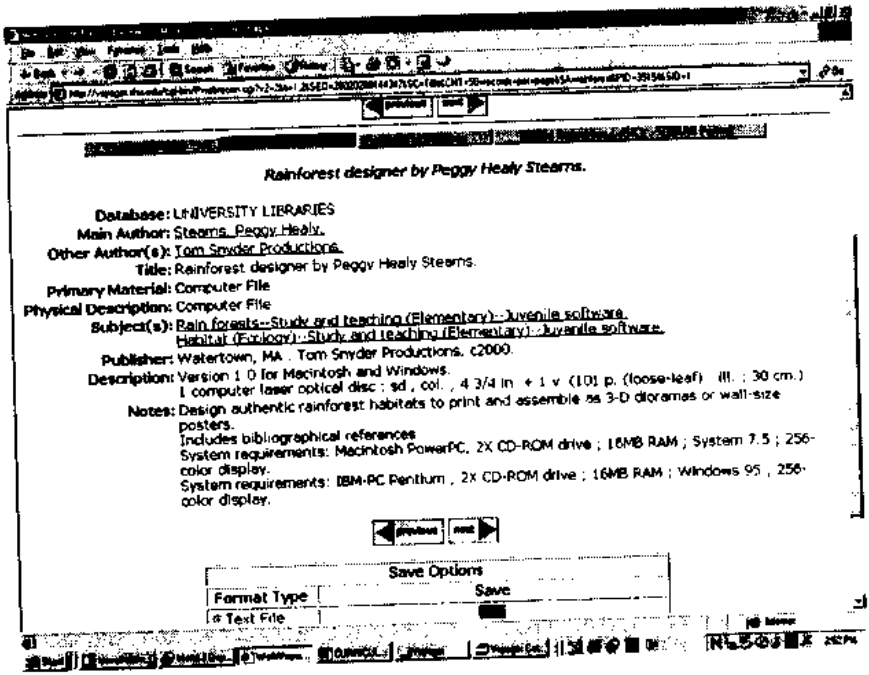
Computer-assisted instruction
Computer-managed instruction
Computer network resources
Internet in education
Educational technology
Education-Data processing
Activity programs in education
Resource programs (Education)
Computer games
Computer word games
Computer adventure games

After experimenting with various terms, the two catalog librarians agreed for the sake of uniformity to simply use the delimiter v subfield '*software*' or '*juvenile software*' for items geared toward the very young (see Diagram 1). For example:

Science lx Study and teaching (Elementary) lv Software.

For statistical purposes and to be able to generate a list of our cataloged software, it was necessary to coordinate the 007 leader with the 245 delimiter h as 'computer file.' We also chose to have *Curriculum* appear on the 852 field of the call number and the attached item record(s) to

DIAGRAM 1

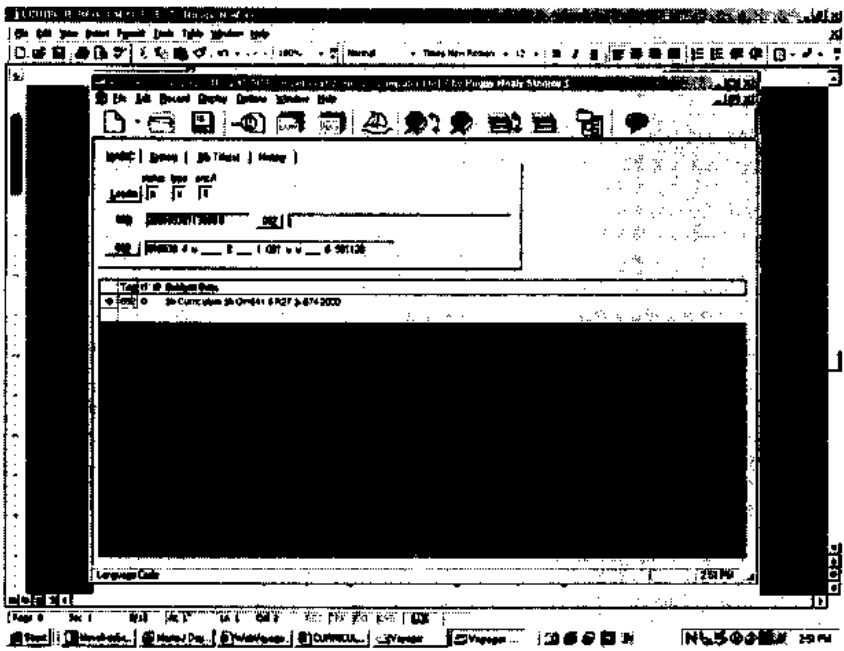


that it would be visible in the OPAC to specify the location of the item in the library (see Diagram 2).

Additionally, the classroom kits proved problematic in that various items in different formats are packaged in one rather bulky box. It is not unusual for a kit to consist of a compact disc, several pamphlets, and a bag of manipulatives. For example, a science kit exploring magnets contains 1 laser optical disc, 1 teacher's manual, and a large plastic bag holding magnets, bottle tops, paper clips, plastic clothes pins, round and cylinder metal shapes, pipe cleaners, crayons and plastic bags. In order to itemize the kit contents, all the components are cited within the OPAC record in the 505 contents field. A list of the contents is also attached directly to the container for user convenience and circulation accountability. Since a student may not require the entire kit, each item within the box is barcoded and a sensory strip is attached to allow for circulation.

Many of these kits also required original cataloging because records were not available in OCLC. Or we would perform substantial modifi-

DIAGRAM 2



cations to existing records when a reasonably useful record was found. In either instance, the cataloging process of the numerous kits being added to the CRC collection demanded substantially more time and effort than the cataloging of our main collection items. We also thought it would be more efficient to catalog the kits and CDs as a series record whenever possible, thus keeping the different grade levels of a particular subject together in the OPAC and on the shelf. This also eased the cataloging process since multiple volumes were attached to a single bibliographic record in Voyager.

We then had to make a decision whether to keep the kits together in one location, or to separate them by subject. Sondra Barbakoff (1999) of Adelphi University in Garden City, New York states that at the Curriculum Materials Center in Swirbul Library the kit contents are removed from their boxes and displayed on open shelves by subject or theme which is more "akin to a bookstore's arrangement by genre and subject than it is to the shelving scheme of a library." Correct us if we

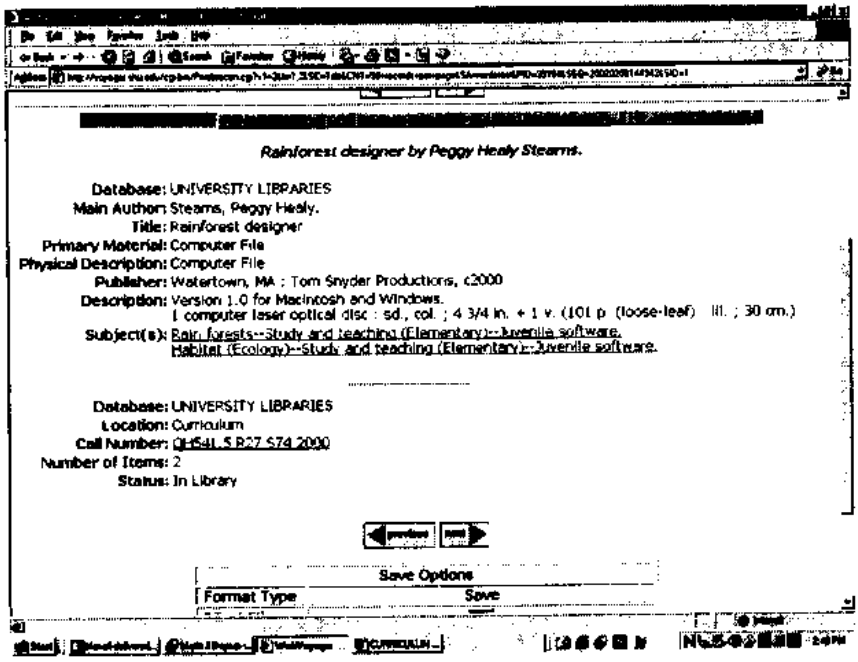
are wrong, but isn't the LC classification system inherently subject organized? How are these individual items monitored and are they circulated? This "bookstore arrangement" may appear wonderful, but just how functional is it in an academic library setting? We therefore chose to keep the kit contents in their respective boxes and shelved them among the textbooks of the same discipline.

For displaying the software, we created a vertical file. CDs that are packaged in bright, attractive cases are removed from their trappings and placed in stackable CD storage carousels. If a small instructional pamphlet accompanies the CD, it is placed in a Princeton File adjacent to the carousel with a note stating as much both on the CD case and the pamphlet. Many CDs are issued in conjunction with a user's guide and/or a teacher's manual. Often these are arranged in a three-ring binder so the CD(s) can be conveniently placed in vinyl jewel cases within the binder along with the printed material. In the Voyager system the placement of these items are also noted in the 866 field of the call number. Also included is the "system requirements" in the 538 MARC field so that the users can determine if the software is compatible with their computer. All CDs and print materials are barcoded and sensitized and are permitted to circulate (see Diagram 3).

The hands-on learning tools, however, do not circulate, and are locked in a large cabinet in the CRC. When a faculty member or a student enrolled in the teacher education program wishes to examine these tools, he/she must register first at the circulation desk. A library employee will obtain the key and unlock the cabinet. When the user has completed his/her inspection, the employee is informed and the cabinet is relocked. An itemized list of the cabinet contents is on file at the circulation desk, it is also attached to the cabinet door, recorded in the OPAC, and is also on file in the Department of Education.

An organized classification scheme for the children's literature collection had to be determined. Previously, the novels were classified under a Readers series designation in English philology and language (PE1117) with multiple book numbers attached to multiple volume numbers. This proved quite a laborious and not a particularly accurate format. For catalogers of scholarly works and adult fiction in a university library, the instinct was to classify the youth fiction as English Literature (PR) and as American Literature (PS). However, designing one's own "LZ " classification schedule and Cutter table of publishers along with the grade level and type of book (textbook, workbook, activity book, etc.) added to the call number, as was done by the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford (Frank 1990), seemed too extreme for our purposes. Therefore, upon consultation with a Youth Services Librarian in

DIAGRAM 3



a local public library on the arrangement and classification of their children's collection, it was determined to catalog our CRC children's fiction in accordance with the Library of Congress PZ schedule for Juvenile Belle Lettres. Thus, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is assigned this call number:

PZ7.R79835 Har 1999

The PZ7 is for general juvenile belle letters, 1870-, the .R79835 is the cutter assigned to J.K. Rowling, the Har is taken from the first main word of the title, and the 1999 is the year of publication. Works of non-fiction and poetry, however, are assigned to their appropriate class.

CONCLUSION

Although the curriculum library functions as a learning center, and presumably some of the information technology materials are for use

only in a classroom setting, we expect to determine through circulation data, how heavily the collection is being used and which parts are accessed most frequently. This should allow us to make future recommendations to both our subject bibliographer and to the education department. It also can alert us to any red flags in the collection, such as to whether our decision to isolate CD-ROMs from their accompanying print materials was a wise choice, or as to whether materials are actually being accessed as a unit or a collection. This kind of detail paid to a collection is very time-consuming and when we think back on the amount of original cataloging and extensive modification of existing records that were required to process these materials, we would advise other catalogers to consider in advance how they might update or create curriculum resource centers in their academic institution. The opportunity to interact with faculty in other university divisions constituted one of the most interesting components of this project. And by working so intensely with these materials, we were able to create a library window display that highlighted the partnership between the College of Education and Human Services and the University Library in implementing the Department of Education grant.

As the new accreditation standards for universities are implemented, academic libraries are likely to reexamine how their resources are targeted to particular segments of the academic population. These standards are for the most part outcome-based and will require schools to institute a strong assessment component into their evaluation of existing programs. The Association of College and Research Libraries has responded to this challenge by seeking to redefine how reference librarians will serve their clientele of faculty and students (ACRL 2000). However, it is clear that technical service librarians, and in particular catalogers, also have a role to play within any new organizational paradigm, since they are the ones who create access to the information physically located within the library.

This article has demonstrated how the catalogers of one academic library have gone beyond the traditional behind-the-scenes role and have collaborated with the faculty in the Department of Educational Studies to establish a revitalized Curriculum Resource Center. By incorporating new forms of educational materials into the CRC collection, new decisions and new standards had to be implemented. In 1992, Henderson and Barron stated, "the traditional curriculum materials center (CMC) that serves teacher education programs has not changed significantly since its inception in 1922." They continued, suggesting, "librarians ... critically examine the role and aims of the CMC in meeting the de-

mands of the 21st Century educators." The Technical Services Department at Seton Hall University, in collaboration with the Department of Education and supported by the U.S. Department of Education grant, has made a concerted effort to meet Henderson and Barron's challenge in "preparing tomorrow's teachers to use technology."

Received: February, 2002
Revised: April, 2002
Accepted: April, 2002

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