



Reimagining a K-12 Collection

The College of New Jersey

NJ Academic Libraries Conference

January 2026

Presenters

Ewa Dziedzic-Elliott, Education Librarian,
Justification of the project

Yuji Tosaka, Cataloging/Metadata Librarian,
Cataloging and MARC records

Bethany Sewell, Access Services Librarian,
Physical planning and workflow

**What inspired this project?
A challenge, a goal, a vision.**



Model Library



Problem 1

The collection consists of K-12 materials that are not arranged by reading levels

Problem 2

There are no specific sections for graphic novels, biographies, foreign language, or YA novels books



Proposed solution

Solution 1

Create a new system following appropriate reading levels

Solution 2

Create additional library subsections

Cataloging and MARC records

Project scope

Reorganize almost entire children's and young adult collections (over 25,000 records, approx. 5% of the library's print holdings)

Challenge

Careful management and coordination needed, with the project planned and organized in phases.

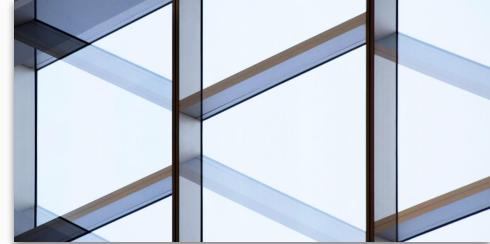
Existing collections

Children's Collection (single location)

- Nonfiction (Dewey — e.g., 629.28304 Smith)
- Fiction (Local [alphabetical order] — e.g., Fict Smith)



Cataloging and MARC records



Project scope

Reorganize almost entire children's and young adult collections (over 25,000 records, approx. 5% of the library's print holdings)

01 Create a new system following appropriate reading levels.

02 Create additional library sections.

Challenge

Careful management and coordination needed, with the project planned and organized in phases.

Reclassify 20,000-plus titles.

Reclassify 4,000-plus titles in formats like biographies, graphic novels, and non-English titles.

Phase 1 — Create additional library sections

- **Project scope — Relabeling and relocation**
 - Biography: 2,000+
 - Graphic novels: 500
 - Non-English titles: 700
 - Young adult fiction: 800+
- **Project timeline**
 - Start date: June 2025
 - End date: end of summer 2025
- **Project needs**
 - Precise, detailed data to identify all physical items to be moved to the new locations
 - In-depth knowledge of MARC 21 formats and library system's functionalities

Phase 1 – Legacy MARC issues

Example: titles with non-English content

Current MARC practice

- Titles in Spanish
008/35-37 spa
- Titles predominantly in Spanish (with English content)
008/35-37 spa
041 \$a spa \$a eng
- Titles predominantly in English or with no predominant language
008/35-37 eng
041 \$a eng \$a spa

Obsolete MARC practice (pre-2001)

- Titles predominantly in Spanish (with English content)
008/35-37 spa
041 \$a spaeng
- Titles predominantly in English or with no predominant language
008/35-37 eng
041 \$a engspa

Phase 1 – Establish priority order for library sections

- Some titles can fall into multiple categories. Clear instructions are needed as a guide for cataloging staff to assign such titles to single sections: e.g.,
 - A fiction, general nonfiction, biography, or graphic novel title may be written in non-English languages.
 - A biography may be published in graphic novel format.
- Order of preference
 - Global = Titles in a non-English language or with significant non-English content, regardless of fiction/non-fiction categories, format, or genre.
 - Graphic = Titles written in graphic novel/comic book format (and in English).
 - Biography = Biography titles in English (not in graphic novel format; excludes biographical fiction).
 - Add the other titles to CH Fiction, YA Fiction, or CH/YA Nonfiction location.

Phase 2 – Create an audience-level based system

- **Proposed solution** – Use target audience codes in MARC 008/22 for bulk processing
 - **a - Preschool** (ages 0-5 years)
 - **b - Primary** (ages 6-8 years)
 - **c - Pre-adolescent** (ages 9-13)
 - **d - Adolescent** (ages 14-17)
- **Goal** – Create four fiction sections and two nonfiction sections (up to age 8 [code: “a” & “b”] and age 9 and above [code: “c” & “d”])
- **Challenge** – Non-specific target audience code used in MARC 008/22
 - **j - Juvenile** (approximate ages 0-15)
 - Half of children’s and young adult titles coded with “j” (ca. 12,000 records)
 - Record reconciliation needed prior to bulk processing and reclassification

Phase 2 – Create an audience-level based system

- **Project scope**
 - Checking physical titles to determine and assign specific audience codes for bulk processing and reclassification
- **Project personnel**
 - 4 non-cataloging staff members (two each from Acquisitions and Access Services)
- **Future work**
 - Pulling and relabeling 20,000-plus print items

Physical planning and workflows



Project scope

Reorganize almost entire children's and young adult collections (over 25,000 records, approx. 6% of the library's print holdings)

O1 Create new locations in Alma and in the stacks for new subsections of the Children's Collection

O2 Coordinate lists of titles to pull with catalog and metadata librarian

Challenge

Careful management and coordination needed, with the project planned and organized in phases.

- Create new locations in Alma
- Pull titles for relabeling
- Determine shelving space needs
- Reshelve relabeled items
- Create new endcaps and wayfinding

Pull the newly reclassified 4,000-plus titles and reshelve them in their new locations: biographies, graphic novels, and non-English locations

Phase 1 — Create additional Alma/Primo locations

Four new locations (same circ policies as the existing CH/YA collections, e.g., 21 day loan)

- **Biographies**
- **Foreign** (i.e., non-English) language materials
- **Graphic novels**
- **Young adult fiction** (no new call number/location configurations needed; the Alma location was set up in 2021)

Call number prefixes/patterns

[Biographies]

CH/YA

BIO

796

.357092

DiMaggio

[Graphic novels]

CH/YA

GN

741

.5952

Takeuchi

[Foreign language materials]

CH/YA

GLOBAL

392

.2

Abeya

Phase 1 – Create additional Alma/Primo locations

[Biographies]

- Location Code: childbio
- Location Name: Child Biography
- External Name: Children's/YA Collection - Biography
- Type: Open
- Call Number Type: Dewey

[Graphic novels]

- Location Code: childgraph (10 character limitation)
- Location Name: Child Graphic
- External Name: Children's/YA Collection - Graphic Novel
- Type: Open
- Call Number Type: Dewey

[Foreign language materials]

- Location Code: childgloba (10 character limitation)
- Location Name: Child Global
- External Name: Children's/YA Collection - Global
- Type: Open
- Call Number Type: Dewey

Phase 1 – Stacks configuration and considerations/ SPACE PLAN

Between the current Curriculum Collection and CH/YA Fiction Collections there were 240 empty shelves.

- ❖ 8 ranges [4*2 front and back] of five bays each holding 6 shelves per bay]
- ❖ Current collection + growth would take 8 ranges @5 shelves/bay (leaving top shelf empty)



- **Biography** (about 2,000+ titles)
 - Five shelves/bay - 3 ranges/75 shelves - leave 9" per shelf before bookend
- **Global** (about 700 titles)
 - Five shelves/bay - 1 ranges/25 shelves - leave 9" per shelf before bookend
- **Graphic Novel** (about 400-500 titles, but growing rapidly)
 - Five shelves/bay - 2 ranges/50 shelves - leave 24" per shelf before bookend
- **Young adult fiction** (about 850+ titles)
 - Five shelves/bay - 2 ranges/50 shelves - leave 21" per shelf before bookend

Impacts of Phase 1 since September 1

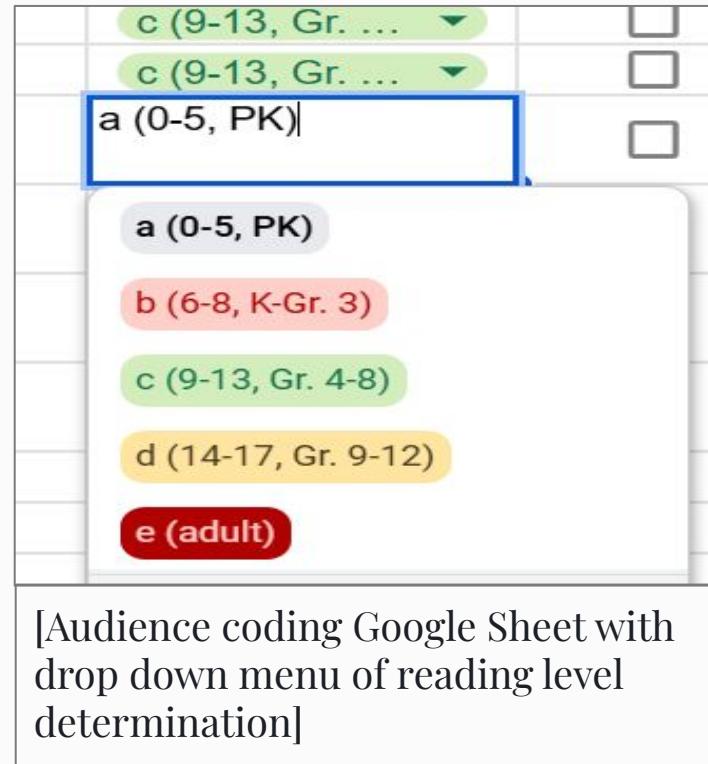
- Improved use...
 - School of Education
 - Browsing
 - Accessibility
 - Stats: too soon to provide stats



Phase 2 – Staff training

How to evaluate a book's reading level?

1. Format of the book: size, paper, other textures
2. Text: length of a sentence, complexity of the vocabulary
3. Illustrations: contrast, details, size of the images
4. Topic
5. [Scholastic](#)
6. [Novelist K-8](#)
7. Book reviews/School Library Journal



A screenshot of a Google Sheet showing a dropdown menu for reading level determination. The menu is a list of categories with associated age ranges and grade levels. The categories are: 'a (0-5, PK)' (highlighted with a blue border), 'a (0-5, PK)', 'b (6-8, K-Gr. 3)', 'c (9-13, Gr. 4-8)', 'd (14-17, Gr. 9-12)', and 'e (adult)'. Each category is enclosed in a colored rounded rectangle: blue for 'a (0-5, PK)', grey for the second 'a (0-5, PK)', red for 'b (6-8, K-Gr. 3)', green for 'c (9-13, Gr. 4-8)', yellow for 'd (14-17, Gr. 9-12)', and dark red for 'e (adult)'. The background of the sheet is white with light grey horizontal and vertical grid lines.

[Audience coding Google Sheet with drop down menu of reading level determination]

Phase 2 – Workflows

- 4 non-cataloging staff members (two each from Acquisitions and Access Services)
- Staff members have a separate Booktruck assigned to them and pull books to be reviewed daily (to avoid materials being off the shelf for too long)
- Students reshelfe the books after the staff review
- Some considerations
 - The staff members have each developed their own workflow and rhythm
 - The surprise bottleneck is in reshelfing as student staff have many other duties and accurate shelving takes more time than retrieving
 - Damaged books
 - Items identified as Adult or Young Adult Fiction are set aside to be relabeled and relocated to the YA Fiction location immediately



Phase 2 – Progress report and next steps

Audience Coding timeline

- July 2025 – Kickoff meeting
- December 2025 - All 11,625 titles reviewed and coded Goal of completing the evaluation by June 2026 was exceeded
- January 2026 - Map out shelving needs of new collections and locations.

Next steps in summer 2026

- Create new endcaps and wayfinding
- Complete the same steps in phase I for phase II:
 - Pulling
 - Relabeling
 - Shelving in new locations

Phase 2 — Total item count (ca. 21,000)

- CH fiction - audience “a” 1000
- CH fiction - audience “b” 4000
- CH fiction - audience “c” 2000
- CH nonfiction - audience “a” 1000
- CH nonfiction - audience “b” 4100
- CH nonfiction - audience “c” 6000
- CH nonfiction - audience “d” 1000

Phase 2 – Review of the size of each new collection based on audience levels and anticipated growth

Evaluation of Current Spacing								
Counted Area	CH fiction - audience "a"	CH nonfiction - audience "a"	CH fiction - audience "b"	CH nonfiction - audience "b"	CH fiction - audience "c"	CH nonfiction - audience "c"	CH nonfiction - audience "d"	
Number of current books	1,000	1,000	4,000	4,100	2,000	6,000	1,000	
Total Inches of Books	450.69	450.69	1802.77	1847.84	901.39	2700.00	750.00	
Average width of books	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.75	
Estimated x yrs of growth	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
Estimated growth	100.00	120.00	200.00	120.00	400.00	200.00	200.00	
Shelf space needed for growth (books)	45.07	54.08	90.14	54.08	180.28	90.00	150.00	
Items Transferred In in past 10 years	10	12	20	12	40	20	20	
Shift Calculation for New Spacing								
Used space in inches	450.69	450.69	1802.77	1847.84	901.39	2700.00	750.00	
Total collection (On shelf + growth) in	550.69	570.69	2002.77	1967.84	1301.39	2900.00	950.00	
Shelves needed for total collection at	15.30	15.85	55.63	54.66	36.15	80.56	26.39	
Added # of shelves per section	11.15	11.56	40.56	39.86	26.36	110.48	36.19	
Revised shelves needed	26.45	27.41	96.20	94.52	62.51	191.04	62.58	
Inches per shelf	36.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	
Space for bookend	2.50	2.50						
Actual space left on every shelf (w/out)	12.68	12.68						
TO MAKE IT FIT NICELY WITHIN A RANGE								
		CH fiction - audience "a"	CH nonfiction - audience "a"	CH fiction - audience "b"	CH nonfiction - audience "b"	CH fiction - audience "c"	CH nonfiction - audience "c"	CH nonfiction - audience "d"
Revised shelves needed		20.00	20.00	100.00	100.00	50.00	150.00	50.00
Rounded value (USE THIS SPACER WITH BOOKEND)		6.00	5.00	14.00	14.00	8.00	15.00	15.00

Phase 2 – Review of the size of each new collection based on audience levels and anticipated growth

Section	CH fiction - audience "c"	
Total Width/	Books per foot	Average Width
12.000	25	0.480
12.000	25	0.480
12.000	26	0.462
12.000	25	0.480
12.000	26	0.462
12.000	36	0.333
12.000	23	0.522
12.000	30	0.400
12.000	31	0.387
12.000	26	0.462
12.000	30	0.400
12.000	20	0.600
		0.456
144.000	323.000	0.446
Median Average		0.451

Section	CH fiction - audience "d"	
Total Width/	Books per foot	Average Wi
12.000	6	2.000
12.000	17	0.706
12.000	18	0.667
12.000	10	1.200
12.000	6	2.000
12.000	19	0.632
12.000	8	1.500
12.000	14	0.857
12.000	13	0.923
12.000	11	1.091
12.000	14	0.857
12.000	19	0.632
		1.089
144.000	155.000	0.929
Median Average		1.009

Phase 2 – Progress report and next steps

- Multi-year process to manage the physical workflow for pulling and relabeling 20,000-plus print items in phases over a few years
 - Realistic summer 2026 relabeling target: 3,000 items max.
 - Need to continue working on the project year around
 - Careful workflow planning and management will need to be worked out this spring
 - Some issues
 - Handling times when books will not be accessible during the regular semesters (summer is not as much an issue)
 - Adjusting OPAC display, changing status indications in Primo while books are in processing

Any
questions?
Ask away!

