

**North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  
Instructional Technology Division**

**Position Statement  
Organization of School Library Media Resources**

“Deliver the right information to the right person at the right time in the right format and in the right location.”

David Loertscher, 2000

Easy and frequent access by students to a full range of quality reading and information materials is a primary goal in order to produce globally competitive students for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. To expedite access, school library media collections, paired with creative programming, provide resources and services specifically targeted toward the interest, information, and enlightenment of all students within the educational setting. Consequently, school library media coordinators and Media and Technology Advisory Committees have a professional obligation to ensure that all students they serve have free, equal, and equitable access to the entire range of library media resources at all times.

Ethical professional practice requires that library media collections be arranged according to a standardized library classification system structure. The national standards for school library media programs, *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*, state, “Organize all resources for effective and efficient use, through such measures as cataloging, classifying, and arranging all elements of the collection.”

School library media collections traditionally use the Dewey Decimal Classification System (DDCS). In this arrangement, each item is assigned a call number that consists of the DDCS number and an accompanying sub-arrangement code (*i.e.*, 599 SRA). Professional practices strongly encourage all circulating print materials to be intershelved. If specialized collections are locally requested, the DDCS also should be adhered to for these areas of the collection. These practices are affirmed in the evaluation rubrics for *IMPACT: Guidelines for North Carolina Media and Technology Programs*, “All media and technology resources are cataloged and circulated using standard library conventions.” It is the position of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction that titles provided by commercially-produced reading incentive programs be shelved by Dewey classification in the Fiction or Non-fiction areas of the collection, rather than grouped separately by vendor assigned reading level. Standard arrangement also enables older students with reading difficulties to access appropriate books without resorting to an area obviously designated for students reading at a lower level. Segregated arrangements, and even leveled labeling of books, should be viewed as a violation of privacy policies.

To further facilitate access, the online catalog, which provides the DDCS number, is searchable by author, title, subject, or keyword. In some catalogs, other types of searches are available such as those based on the reading levels associated with commercially-produced reading motivation programs. Consequently, online catalogs facilitate multiple search strategies to locate an item, meeting a curriculum or interest need, as well as a specified reading level requirement. Therefore, the combination of shelf organization and a searchable online catalog facilitates access to information for all curriculum areas and for personal interest needs without resorting to non-standardized shelving arrangements.

Additionally, basic library organization should be taught to students from pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, progressing from the Easy-to-Read/Fiction and Non-fiction DDCS organization to an awareness of the Library of Congress Classification System. An understanding of these organizational systems reinforces usage of school and public libraries, as well as technical and academic institutions. Continuous practical application of using the DDCS and the online catalog while in school prepares students for a lifetime of library usage and enables them to become independent life-long learners.

In summary, the partnership of the classification system and the online catalog facilitate access to information for personal and curriculum needs. By teaching students to use these tools, educators provide the learning skills needed for them to function flexibly and knowledgeably during the acquisition of information and reading materials.

(This policy statement is adapted with permission from the Library Media Services Department, Florida Department of Education.)

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