

Floating Collections

Roundtable discussion at NEFLIN Annual Conference 2010
Presented by Emily Young



A floating collection is:

- shared.
- patron centered.

Floating collection: materials remain at the location where they are returned unless they are needed to fulfill a hold request.

Traditional library collection: each item is assigned a home location

Benefits of a floating collection are:

- increased patron satisfaction.
 - Floating increases variety at each location. Each day the collection is a little different.
 - Floating allows patrons to shape the collection at their local branch.
- decreased duplication of staff work. It eliminates in-transit bins of materials.
- reduced costs.
 - transit costs
 - decrease in the number of copies of a title needed.

Issues associated with floating a library collection include:

- redistribution of material – some locations may lack materials while others have too many.
- weeding.
- branch specific practices. For example, inconsistent labeling of materials.
- staff anxiety and fear.

Alachua County Library District (ACLD):

- provides library services to the approximately 250,000 residents of Alachua County.
- has 11 branches throughout the county as well as 2 bookmobiles.

Timeline of transition to a floating collection at ACLD:

- Winter 2007 – Certain high price non-fiction books were designated floating.
- Summer 2008 – A committee was formed with the charge of figuring out how to float audio visual and large print materials. The committee devised a method for redistribution and provided training for the staff.
- Fall 2008 - The audio visual and large print collections began floating. Patrons commented that they enjoyed the improved selection but did not know why the selection was better.
- Fall 2010 – Everything is floating!