

# When Art Meets the LC Classification System

Kerry Leek, CCC Librarian and Sarah Nolan, CCC Librarian

Thomas Wasson, CCC Art Instructor and Jennifer Whitten, CCC Graphic Arts graduate

## Introduction

In 2015, the Clackamas Community College (CCC) library applied and received an innovation grant through the college foundation office to enhance library signage. Instead of the usual LC signs to direct students in the stacks, the library worked collaboratively with the art department to make LC signs with color coded icons within the LC classification system. In order to make the signs uniform, an advanced graphic art student was selected to make the icons after working with the library and her graphic art instructor.

## History

The CCC library needed new shelving signs because signs were destroyed by water during the burst-pipe disaster at the end of Fall term 2013.

Inspiration came from a similar project at the Oakland Public Library. The sign project there was particularly meaningful to new patrons and patrons with learning disabilities in order to navigate and browse the collection.



## Objectives

- Work collaboratively with the art department to foster interdepartmental relationships
- Create bright and inviting signage for the library stacks
- Provide multiple access points for students to engage with the collection



## Creation

We met with Thomas Wasson, art department faculty, to discuss what we needed. We set our goal for 100 signs. This number would grow to nearly 150 signs with over 130 unique icons over the next year.

Armed with a list of Library of Congress subject headings, we developed a list of desired signs based on our unique collection.

Decisions included:

- How many signs to make
- Color scheme – we decided that each major section would have its own color
- Which call #s get a sign, and which do not. We chose to have roughly one sign per shelf section unless the call # had multiple sections. When there were two or more call #s per section we chose to represent the largest number of books.

Mr. Wasson then engaged Jennifer Whitten, a CCC student, to create all of the icons.

## Successes

We have had an overwhelmingly positive response to the signs. Instructors, administrators, and students praise the use of the colorful icons within the library stack spaces.

Student assignments in First Year Experience (FYE101) indicate that students are finding the signs helpful in determining sections of interest for browsing and for identifying how to follow an LC call number. ESL students on tours have remarked how easy it is for them to find their easy reading section based on the signage.



## Lessons

### Communication issues

Staffing challenges in the art department led to missed deadlines and less-than-ideal communication throughout most of the project. This extended the process nearly a year beyond our initial timeline. Agreeing to a more formalized timeline may have improved this issue, although personality and working styles may have also contributed to the delayed communication.

### Velcro vs. Magnets

Thomas suggested holding the signs in place with large magnets. This led to the choice of metal for the signs. Magnets were deemed too unstable and ugly, so we switched to industrial Velcro. The signs remain metal, which is a tad heavy and occasionally the signs sag. Plastic signs may be easier to manufacture and hang.

### Commitment to the project

After nearly two years of working on the project, the art department abruptly ended their participation at the end of Spring term 2016. They provided us with the stickers for the final 15 icons and all of the digital assets. These signs are still not finished with no end date pending, however the library is able to continue the project as needed.

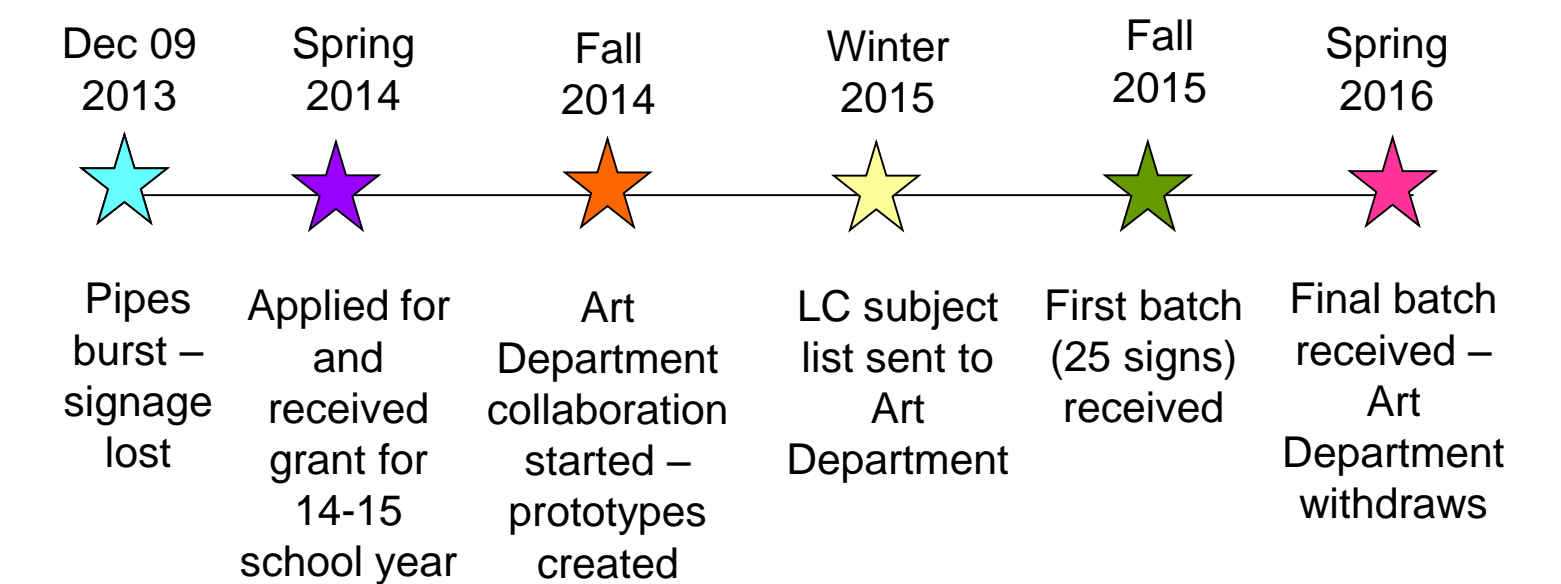
## Conclusions

Working collaboratively across departments is fun but presents the challenge of a slower timeline.

The collaboration between the art department and the library department has had a positive effect on the library. Our LC icon signage provides multiple touch points for students to access our collection. The signage assists students with learning disabilities, and new readers can associate an image within the LC call number schedule. The signs are fun and useful for all students regardless of their library experience or background when coming to our community college.



## Timeline



### References

Nakao, Annie. "Oakland: Library icons help those with learning disabilities navigate the shelves." *SFGate*, 23 Sept. 2005, <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Oakland-Library-icons-help-those-with-learning-2607029.php>.

