1. **How are books typically sorted in a traditional school library?**

*A traditional school library typically organizes books by the Dewey Decimal System. This means non-fiction books are assigned a number based on the book’s subject and fiction books are arranged alphabetically by the author’s last name. Usually the picture books are grouped separately and designated with an E which used to stand for Easy but was changed to Everyone books. The Dewey Decimal System was created in the late 1800’s and revolutionized how books were previously organized by providing a way that was consistent across libraries and throughout the world. Like any system, it isn’t perfect. It’s dependent on who catalogues the book and what subject number they assign the book. It’s also dependent on users memorizing or having a good understanding of the Dewey numbers.*

1. **What inspired you to change how you were sorting your books?**

*Observing our students closely made it easy to decide that a different organizational scheme was needed. First, they continued to ask for books in a way that connected to the book’s genre, such as, “Where are the scary books?” So, we spent time arranging the fiction books by genre. The students really appreciated this and found it easier to find books that they were interested in reading. Regarding the non-fiction books, I saw the need for the kids to be exposed to the vocabulary of subject heading, not its corresponding Dewey Decimal number. Many of our students lack exposure to print rich environments, and I would rather immerse them in words not Dewey numbers. Also, I would rather spend time helping them with basic literacy skills and not with trying to help them learn the Dewey Decimal System. As a result, I labeled the shelves with the subject names.*

*I continued to observe the students and noticed that they were asking for animal books and sports books and were interested in exploring both fiction and non-fiction of connected categories. Also, they would break down a category and ask about dog books (fiction and nonfiction). This caused me to ponder going beyond genrefication and to develop a scheme of arranging fiction and nonfiction books with a common theme in the same area. And to include activities in these areas as well.*

1. **What were some key factors in determining how you were going to sort/group your books?**

*A key factor was grouping books that have a common theme. See* [*this document*](https://docs.google.com/document/d/13M8XO2Reh60-nM5q-l7hAO5FGgQqhtY2uKsB6fU-Azw/edit) *to see how the books were grouped in each portal. Within each category, books are arranged alphabetically by author’s last name. Biographies in each category are arranged by the name of the person profiled.*

1. **Provide some examples of how books are now grouped.**

*(See document linked above)*

*Also, we are using bins in some of the areas for easy access and grouping. This is especially useful in the Investigate Nature area.*

*Here’s a* [*photo example*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bx1A4AGgmZeZNTBJQXNDR1huSTdjMVJzbzNqTVd2Wlk2M3g4/view?usp=sharing)*.*

1. **How are you labeling each section?**

*Each section is labeled on the book shelf with the name of the category, such as Humor Fiction. Each of the 6 learning portals has a specific color label for the spine. In Destiny, the Sub-Location field lets users know where to find it, such as EXPRESS- Humor Fiction.*

1. **Since the change, what kind of changes have you noticed with regards to how your students are now approaching books in the library?**

*Students are much more independent in selecting a book and enjoy looking at other books in that learning portal. Our book checkout numbers have doubled since last year which is also a result of having a school-wide reading challenge and empowering teachers to confer with their students about reading. Students are also able to make suggestions of books that we need to get because it’s visually obvious which categories are lacking interesting books.*

1. **What kind of feedback are you getting from your students?**

*They say that they like it this way because they can easily find books based on their interests. A couple of teachers are insisting that students only choose books within their Lexile level, so that requires an extra step of using the Destiny catalog to search by Lexile level. These students would probably prefer if the books were organized by Lexile level, but that is not the desire of our Think Tank group of teachers or of me.*

1. **What has been the biggest challenge with this initiative?**

 *The biggest challenge was separating the picture books into categories. For instance, an animal-based book could be in Investigate Nature, but if it had to do with family relationships, it was a better fit to have it in Stay Fit & Healthy. I had some teachers help me because of the time it was taking. We now have picture books in each of the six portals. Four of the portals have the picture books facing out. We are finding that more picture books are getting checked out by all ages because of their location in a portal.*

 *Another big challenge was not having the right tools to undo the book cases that*

1. **How long did it take you to regroup the books?**

 *It took about two weeks over the summer.*

1. **Are more books being checked out since the regrouping?**

*(See answer #6)*

1. **Did you receive any sort of pushback from administration on regrouping the books?**

*There hasn’t been any pushback. In fact, administration and the teachers think it’s a great idea.*

1. **Did you receive any support from teachers, parents, or students to help with this project?**

*We had some teachers help sort the books. We also had a class of students provide feedback on the organizational plan.*

1. **What kind of support do you think is needed to complete this project?**

*You definitely need to have teachers and admin on board. Having a Think Tank with one teacher for each grade level, or some other type of group of teachers, is critical because then they will have ownership of the project and will be able to influence its success. Everyone needs to understand the ‘Why’ of the project. For us, it was to better meet the needs of our students and to help them explore and discover interests and passions.*