

### III. Collection Development

Both librarians and library staff need to know the strengths and weaknesses of the library collection. This is an ongoing process and involves the creation of a collection development/selection policy and plan, assessment of the current status of the collection, and ongoing weeding and acquisition of new materials. In a school environment it is also essential for the collection to support the ever changing school curriculum. A current and relevant collection demonstrates that public funds are being spent wisely and the collection not only meets the *informational requirements* of the school community but also the *independent reading needs* of the staff and student body.

Every school and school district needs to have a written policy for the selection of all instructional materials including, but not restricted to, books, e-books, textbooks, periodicals, database subscriptions, audio files, and visual media. This policy ensures the *systematic* improvement of a collection that not only meets the needs of the school curriculum, but also stays as current and relevant as funds allow. An integral part of the process of collection development is “deselection” of materials or weeding. A written policy for this process should also be included in the district's and library policy manual.

Once these policies have been created (see section IV “Policies: Collection Development”) it is time to select materials that meet the stated criteria and needs of the students and teaching staff.

Collection development is a four step process of analyzing the collection, identifying needs, assessing available resources, and planning how to improve and to secure funds for this process.

#### **1. Analyze the collection:**

- Determine which materials meet the standards that are expected of all library acquisitions in regards to excellence, comprehensiveness, authority, copyright date and reading level.
- Obtain statistics to support your findings. These can come from the circulation system, inventory reports, or collection mapping.
- Analyze the copyright dates of time sensitive areas such as science and social studies. Dated materials in these areas can provide inaccurate information.
- Submit your collection to one of the companies who offer electronic collection development tools. Follett’s Titlewave program allows you to do this. By submitting the collection, and then resubmitting it each year, one can track the progress made on updating copyright dates, individual areas of strength and weakness and also compare the library collection to other standard school library collections such as Wilson's.
- Obtain a current curriculum map from your school to keep abreast of changes and ongoing class projects.
- Map your collection. Collection Mapping is much the same process as is done by the online companies but can be done in hard copy by the individual libraries. It

most often divides the collection into three segments: the **Basic collection** which supports the widest variety of interests, **General emphasis** which supports school wide courses such as U.S. history, biology etc. and **Specific emphasis** which supports individual assignments within the course selections. Read more about this method of visually assessing the library collection at the following sites.

The School Library Media Specialist: Library Media Program Collection Mapping - <http://eduscapes.com/sms/program/mapping.html>

Collection evaluation in School Libraries; Amanda Credaro ©1999, 2000, 2001  
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Styx/7534/UNIVERSITY/TLship/ColIEval.html>

Collection Mapping: An Evaluation Strategy for Collection Development by David Loertscher. Book – Available through Amazon although it is now out of print.

- Inventory the collection yearly. Inventory not only informs you what you have on hand, but also keeps you familiar with the collection.
- Weed the collection yearly. Less is More!

## 2. Identify Needs:

- Become a member of the school curriculum committees and attend meetings on a regular basis.
- Attend department meetings in the school to understand challenges and brainstorm ideas for new classes and research projects.
- Send out request /needs forms to teachers and staff on a regular basis.
- Solicit requests and suggestions from the student body.
- Keep abreast of the changing school population, reading levels, ethnicity, clubs, etc.

**3. Collection Development Resources:** Once it has been determined what areas need to be enhanced the following resources/tools may help you to locate the right materials to fill these needs.

- [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) (All ages)
- American Libraries [www.ala.org/ala/online/aboutal/aboutamerican.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/online/aboutal/aboutamerican.cfm) (All ages)
- Book Links  
[www.ala.org/ala/productsandpublications/periodicals/booklinks/booklinks.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/productsandpublications/periodicals/booklinks/booklinks.cfm) (K-12, though the emphasis is on the elementary grades)
- Booklist – all ages. [www.ala.org/ala/booklist](http://www.ala.org/ala/booklist) Reviews of books, audiobooks, reference sources, video, and DVD titles
- Children's Catalog <http://www.hwwilson.com> (Pre-K through grade 6) A

- publication of the H. W. Wilson Company.
- Common Sense Media <http://www.common sense media.org/book-reviews>
  - Horn Book [www.hornbook.com/](http://www.hornbook.com/) Pre-K through Young Adult
  - Junior High School or Senior High School Catalog
    - [www.hwwilson.com/print/mjhscat.cfm](http://www.hwwilson.com/print/mjhscat.cfm) Grades 5 – 9
    - [www.hwwilson.com/print/srhscat.cfm](http://www.hwwilson.com/print/srhscat.cfm) Grades 9-12
  - Novelist <http://libraries.maine.edu/mainedatabases> Accessible through MARVEL! This allows students and teachers to search novels via keywords, themes, read-alikes, etc.
  - Publisher's Quality Library Service [www.pqlsbooks.com/default.aspx](http://www.pqlsbooks.com/default.aspx) Offers two levels of catalogs: K-7 and 8-12.
  - Reading Roundup Reading Round-Up (RRU) is a statewide annual conference held each April, sponsored by the Maine Regional Library System and the Maine Library Association's Youth Services Section. Reading Round-Up is a conference to learn ideas for promoting, marketing, evaluating, and purchasing noteworthy juvenile literature. Further information
    - Southern Maine Library District Office,  
5 Monument Square, Portland, ME 04101  
(207) 871-1766 or 1-800-649-7696  
[SMLD@portland.lib.me.us](mailto:SMLD@portland.lib.me.us)
  - School Library Journal [www.schoollibraryjournal.com](http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com) Reviews of books, audio/visual, and software K-12
  - Tartan Books [www.tartanbooks.com](http://www.tartanbooks.com) Young adult and adult Tartan offers these previously rented, popular books, at greatly discounted prices.
  - VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates) is a bimonthly journal addressing librarians, educators, and other professionals who work with young adults. Bimonthly from Scarecrow Press. [www.voya.com/](http://www.voya.com/).
  - Web sites:
    - Maryland State Department of Education Instructional Resource Evaluation Guidelines. This includes a checklist to aid in the selection of library materials.  
[http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/programs/etma/reports/ETM\\_evaluation.htm](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/programs/etma/reports/ETM_evaluation.htm)
    - Eduscapes has a variety of resources to aid in the selection of school library materials.  
<http://eduscapes.com/sms/overview/selectiontools.html>

#### 4. Collection Development Planning:

- Create a long-range plan which delineates the current condition of the library collection and the methods and goals outlined for the next few years to improve this collection. This plan will not only help the librarian to clearly see what need to be done, but will also keep the administration informed as to what you are doing and lets them know that your plan is well thought out.
- Create an annual report and share this with the administration, school board and

- staff.
- Create long term and short term goals. Make sure these goals are realistic in relation to your budget.
  - Purchase vs. Inter-library Loan (ILL)  
A school library budget often cannot support the purchase of all materials necessary for individual and changing projects throughout the year, therefore the librarian may need to look for other options to satisfy the needs of the school community. The use of Inter-library loans for specialized projects or infrequently used resources is an excellent method of extending and enhancing the available library resources.
  - Selection/Gift policies – Make sure to include a “gift policy” in the policy written for material selection. This ensures that the librarian can apply the same standards for accepting gifts as he/she would in purchasing materials for the library.

### **Collection Development: Resources for School Librarians**

The site is maintained by Linda Bertland, school librarian (retired), Philadelphia, PA. <http://www.sldirectory.com/libsf/resf/coldev2.html>

## Inventory

### **What is Inventory?**

An inventory is a detailed, itemized list, report, or record of things located in a particular place or in one's possession. A library inventory is an accounting of items such as computers, books, tables, chairs, maps, equipment and other objects. The word inventory may also describe a process by which items and information in a library's holdings are verified and the physical condition of each item is assessed.

Most automated circulation systems include a feature which will generate an inventory. However, to accurately assess the complete holdings of a library, the physical condition of each item should be verified individually. This can be very time consuming as it requires that someone examine every book, computer, videotape, DVD, etc. for the purpose of assessing and accounting for each object.

### **What is a reason to inventory?**

The information collected from an inventory can be helpful for planning and can be used for many purposes such as these listed below:

- Facilitate an up-to-date catalog of library holdings
- Assist in collection development and facilities planning
- Present an opportunity to discover mistakes in the shelf list and/or labeling or bar-coding of materials
- Determine what items are missing
- Point out deficiencies or weaknesses in a collection
- Provide statistics for accountability or to justify budgeted needs

Advantages of annual inventories:

- Correct and update the listing of all materials in the collection
- Gives a chance to look at each book and become more familiar with the collection
- Discover problems that might otherwise be overlooked
- Discover missing items that may clear patrons of overdue and lost book charges
- Identify items for repair, replacement or removal
- Determine holdings in case of emergency
- Assess the relevance of materials in the collection

### **What should be inventoried?**

Items to be included in an inventory vary from school to school or library to library. In some schools, the Library Media Specialist may be responsible for the inventory of equipment in the entire building including everything from copiers to computer printers. Each Library Media Specialist should determine what will be inventoried in their particular setting. Items which may be included are books, videos, audios, kits, maps, desks, tables, chairs, bookcases, TVs, DVDs, etc.

## What is involved with conducting inventory?

The types of items to be included in the inventory will determine the method(s) one must use to conduct the inventory. Certain items will require individual inspection while others may simply need to be accounted for in a collection. Automated library systems will facilitate the process and decrease the time spent on inventory. Generally, the process involves the library staff in performing the tasks below.

- **Arrange** materials in the correct call number order. Make note of books shelved separately for particular programs such as biographies, careers, oversized, etc.
- **Develop** a strategy for moving through the collection that makes sense for your situation.
  - For non-automated collections, compare the shelf list cards with the books on the shelf. Work with teams of two where one pulls a book from the shelf as the other checks the card to be sure the title and call number are correct. Be sure to read from the book to the card...not vice-versa.
  - For automated collections, either use a hand-held wand or move your computer to a place where your wand cord will reach the shelves.
- **Remove** items that need attention, mark them with a note and place them in a designated spot to be managed later.
  - Check for items to be weeded or repaired
  - Check for missing items – be sure to check circulation files, bindery records, the repair pile, and ask teachers before marking an item lost
  - Check for items that need to be cleaned
  - Check for items that need replacement labels or bar codes
- **Develop** a strategy for managing the items that you remove
  - Perhaps use a pre-made note on each book and place the book on its spine so that the note can be seen. Separate books into categories of need and attend to the needs as soon as possible to get the books back on the shelves.
- **Prepare** an inventory report to keep on file for reference
  - At the end of the inventory, when you are sure that the printed lists are as accurate as possible, finalize your inventory and print a list. Remove weeded and/or destroyed items from the catalog of automated systems. Pull the shelf list and all catalog cards of books that are not going to be replaced from non-automated card catalogs.

## When should an inventory be conducted?

It is recommended that an inventory be conducted once per year to identify lost materials and to get materials into their proper places. Although it is common to conduct an inventory at the end of the school year, there are other options. Depending upon the size of the library collection, it may make sense to inventory one or two sections each month or split the inventory by semester. To maximize the use of the data obtained by the inventory, it will be useful to have the results available when planning budgets and preparing orders.

## Tips and Hints

### Preparation for Inventory:

1. **Schedule** - Determine inventory schedule and notify patrons of deadlines to return materials.
2. **Plan ahead** - If you will need to close a section while school is in session be sure to give enough notice. Avoid closing sections that may be needed for up-coming classroom assignments. (i.e. closing the career section during a teaching unit for careers).
3. **Shelf-Read** – Be sure items are arranged correctly & that no items are on loan for inventory section.
4. **Weed** - Sections to be inventoried should be weeded in advance.
5. **Update records** - If doing a manual inventory be sure the filing is up-to-date, both for the shelf-list and the public card catalog. If using an automated system, be sure the catalog records are up-to-date.
6. **Recruit and Train Assistants** - Additional personnel trained in inventory procedures can greatly facilitate and expedite the process. Employing others to help may also allow library media specialist to continue the educational programs while the inventory is in process. Possible sources for personnel to assist library staff in conducting the inventory are teacher assistants, student assistants and adult volunteers.

### Procedures for Inventory:

1. **Work in pairs** – When possible, work in pairs, one person with the shelf list cards or report, one checking items in the collection.
2. **Remove** all "problem" items from the shelf, flag with the appropriate "problem slip" and place in a designated cart or box. Problems can later be sorted as to type.
3. **Check circulation** cards/records for materials on loan and materials sent for bindery or materials awaiting repair in the LMC workspace against the shelf list. Revise notations regarding missing item(s) as necessary.

### Follow Up after Inventory:

1. **Retrieve Missing Items**  
Create list of missing items in shelf list order. Circulate a copy among the staff and students, and ask for cooperation in locating missing items.
2. **Mark "Lost"** – items that cannot be found should be marked as lost. There are many methods used to do this in a paper catalog/shelf list. Paper clips, colored plastic clips and colored plastic sleeves for the catalog/shelf list cards are used. The latter two may be purchased through library supply companies.



3. **Correct discrepancies** – If you discovered errors or discrepancies with barcode numbers or labeling, make the corrections before placing items back on the shelf.
4. **Make needed repairs to marked items** – Repair pages, replace labels and/or barcodes, replace book covers, etc.
5. **Compile inventory information and record data in a report – narrative or statistical.** The librarian can use this information to plan purchases. The librarian can use this information to determine if a particular section of the collection is more prone to theft and take appropriate measures to minimize the theft such as placing certain items behind the desk or in the office with a corresponding note to that effect in the catalog. Patrons would be instructed to “see Librarian” in order to use these materials.
6. **Evaluate Collection** - Use Inventory statistics to assess strengths and identify weaknesses in collection.
7. **Withdraw Lost Items** - Withdraw titles that have been missing/lost for a year or more.
8. **Replace** – Replace lost or damaged items.
9. **Update catalog to reflect changes** – Remove appropriate shelf list and catalog cards or delete the material record from the automated database.

#### **Helpful sites and sources of inventory information:**

An overview of “Why Inventory”

<http://eduscapes.com/sms/program/inventory.html>

An overview of “How”, including blogs on library inventories

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2085124\\_conduct-school-library-inventory.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2085124_conduct-school-library-inventory.html)



## **Weeding**

### **I. What is Weeding?**

Similar to any situation where we want to encourage growth and development and stimulate the best use of a resource, we need to judiciously remove or “weed” items from our library collections. The use of the horticultural analysis is a good one since it evokes 1) looking carefully at the collection (garden) and 2) extracting (weeding) those items no longer of use and impeding the growth of the rest of the collection.

### **II. Why Weed?**

We remove items from our collections for a number of reasons. In schools, weeding is a different process than it would be in other types of libraries.

In schools, our “raison d’etre”, our primary reason for being, is curriculum support. Certainly, we also want well-rounded collections where students and others can expect to find a wide variety of materials of interest, teaching/professional materials for faculty and administrators and leisure-reading resources for all reading levels reflected in the school community. We do not need to be the “library of last resort” for rare and historical volumes unless they reflect the history of the school or we serve also as the public library for the community. Also, we are fortunate in Maine to have a well-organized and vibrant interlibrary loan and ARRC system. Simply put, we don’t have to keep everything!

Furthermore, our collections will be better-used if our shelves are not tightly clogged with worn-out, dated and erroneous materials. A brief perusal of random library shelves speaks volumes (pun intended) about whether students will find materials they can and want to use for their projects and personal interests. Simply put, it is better to have a smaller number of current, attractive, engaging and useful volumes than to have shelf after shelf of dusty, unused tomes.

### **III. Why We Don’t Weed**

Librarians are able to see the usefulness of all information sources and are often loathe to discard anything for fear that it might be needed. They fear that books and other materials removed from the collection will decrease their volume count and that dwindling budgets and increasing costs will make it impossible to find a replacement for every item discarded or to afford those replacements if they can be found. Thankfully, we live in the Information Age. Libraries no longer need to be separate info-islands unto themselves and no matter how substantial our budgets, we all select items for our collections that best suit our audiences. Most librarians who have been around for a while have had the experience of someone asking for the item you tossed the day before. It doesn’t make you a bad librarian!

#### IV. **Criteria for Weeding**

Weeding the collection is always best done in conjunction with collection development. Many libraries divide their collections into workable sections and focus on a section for both development and weeding each year. This is not to say that materials won't be added to other areas during a given year, but rather to define areas for closer scrutiny each year.

In schools, sections of the collection are usually inventoried and weeded in the Spring. This allows the summer and early fall to review available materials and purchase for the upcoming year. For instance, a five-year rotation plan might be developed for review, weeding, availability and purchase in the following manner:

Spring 2008-Fall 2008 – 100's, 200's, 400's  
Spring 2009-Fall 2009 - 300's  
Spring 2010-Fall 2010 - 500's, 600's  
Spring 2011-Fall 2011 - 800's, Fiction  
Spring 2012-Fall 2012 - 700's, 900's

This is a five-year plan that:

1. divides the collection into workable groups given that some areas such as the 300's and 900's are larger than others (100's, 200's, 400's.)
2. considers areas that in schools often overlap (science and applied science, literature and fiction, history and art)
3. plans for review of all sections cataloged in these subject areas including reference, audio-visual and online resources.

In the Spring, the librarian would begin looking at all materials to determine what needed to be removed, what needed to be replaced both by subject or specific title and would then use collection development criteria to locate and order materials in the same content area.

Here are important questions to ask when reviewing sources for weeding and/or replacement:

1. Is the item related to our current curriculum?
2. If not, is it still of interest to members of our school community?
3. Is the information provided in the resource accurate?
4. Is it inaccurate because of the publication date of the book?
5. Is it inaccurate because of the way the material is presented?
6. Is it inaccurate because of bias or other social issues?
7. How many students at one time will need this information?
8. Are there other materials in the collection which present the same material in a more appropriate or up-to-date manner?
9. What is the condition of the material?

10. How often is this item used? (not just circulated)
11. Is the format or reading level appropriate for those who use this material?
12. Are additional materials at a different reading level needed?

### **Resources**

There are a number of resources to use to both learn and implement effective weeding practices. The most commonly used methods in the profession are *C.R.E.W.* and *M.U.S.T.Y./M.U.S.T.I.E.* While the acronyms are obviously mnemonic, the processes themselves give the school librarian a template of steps to follow that are useful to both beginning and seasoned practitioners. Reminding ourselves of the “cycle of service” that connects all library processes is a good idea no matter how many years of experience we have.

**C.R.E.W.** Continuous Revision, Evaluation and Weeding  
<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ld/pubs/crew/index.html>

**M.U.S.T.Y.** Misleading, Ugly, Superseded, Trivial, Your collection  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/lb/documents/weedingbrochure.pdf>  
(this is an excellent bi-fold brochure with weeding basics)

### **Other useful web resources:**

Arizona Dept. of Library  
<http://www.lib.az.us/cdt/weeding.aspx#Overview>

Illinois State Library Media Association – Guidelines for Weeding  
<http://www.islma.org/pdf/weeding.PDF>

Managing and Analyzing Your Collection – A Practical Guide  
for Small Libraries and School Media Centers &  
Weeding & Less is More – A Practical Guide to Weeding School Library Collections  
<http://www.alastore.ala.org/>

Selection Criteria for School Library Media Centers – Baltimore County  
<http://www.bcps.org/offices/lis/office/admin/selection.html>

Weeding Library Collections – American Library Association  
(a collection of resources to aid in weeding)

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alalibrary/libraryfactsheet/fact15.cfm>

Weeding School Library Media Collections

<http://www.ala.org/tools/libfactsheets/alalibraryfactsheet15>

## V. What Else To Do While Weeding

As has been discussed above, weeding is an integral part of the entire “cycle of service” that is the library. Certainly the weeding process encompasses more than just an inventory of whether or not an item is where it is supposed to be. There are, however, steps that can be taken at the same time to improve accessibility and use of the materials in the library rather than discarding them. This is why it is important to ask not only whether a book has circulated (e.g. how many times) but also why it has not. Here are some additional questions to ask:

1. Are the subject headings assigned to this item useful for those who might use it? Updating or adding access points (subjects, additional authors/illustrators, scope notes, etc) can often substantially increase use. Use the authority file and subject heading guides to help in this process.
2. Is this item “orphaned” on the shelf away from other materials on the same topic? Some classification systems intentionally separate different aspects of the same subject but classification numbers have also changed over time and may need to be updated, especially if you receive your materials with cataloging. Consistent subject headings bring materials together in the catalog regardless of classification but students often search by keyword and then browse. For example, there are several places in Dewey Classification for materials on immigration and emigration and those numbers have changed over time.

## VI. What To Do With Discarded Materials

Once materials are chosen for discard, the question remains of what to do with them. Occasionally, materials still have value but not for the collection under consideration. Perhaps a book is better suited to a library serving other age levels. Maybe six copies of a particular title are no longer needed. Most often, however, it is not a good idea to offer discarded materials to teachers. If the material is not worthy of remaining in the library collection it probably doesn't belong in the classroom either.

Occasionally, if collections have not been weeded in a long time, discarded titles are of interest to used and antiquarian book dealers. While ex-library copies are not the most sought-after by dealers they sometimes have collectors who will purchase them.

It's a good idea to develop a relationship with your local dealers and perhaps accept credit that can be used for replacement items.

There are organizations that act as brokers to provide used books for developing world libraries or who sell used materials and provide a percentage of their profit to support charitable organizations. These should be researched carefully to ensure professionalism and legality. All identifying marks and materials should be removed or covered before the items leave the library. Many libraries have a "discard" stamp that is affixed over ownership stamps. In many communities, materials from dumpsters are transported directly to the local energy recovery center so there is no longer the fear that discarded items will return to the library from the dump! Removing the hardcover from books does allow the pages to be recycled.

## V. **Conclusion**

Weeding in libraries is a necessary and important part of providing good service. Just as libraries develop selection policies and procedures when adding materials, so should there be defensible procedures for removing material from the collection. Procedures for removal should be included in the library's written policies. Responsibility for removal of materials should be included in the duties of the Library/Media Specialist. Using stated criteria for weeding ensures the continued growth of the library and maintains the most useful and attractive collection.