

COLLECTION MAPPING FOR WEEDING

Before discussing how to weed, I want to touch briefly upon a strategy for replacing materials, and that is collection mapping. A bit of background first. In answer to the question, "What is the function of a school library collection?" we school librarians respond in chorus, "To support the curriculum of the school." However, should we stop and really think about the way in which we practice selection, we may begin to realize that our practice results in a collection similar to one in a public library. We've been influenced by our library school professors who frequently are (or have been taught by) public library oriented professors. We survey our community (school setting, students, general curriculum), select titles from current review periodicals, use recommended lists, create consideration files, and prioritize selected titles at ordering time. We find ourselves trying to impose a collection upon unwilling teachers, and buying materials we hope will be useful to students and teachers. WE all become frustrated.

However, by doing an in-depth curricular study we have the foundation of a sound collection building policy for a school. Once we know what is being taught now and in the near future, we can employ the "elephant method" of collection building. Someone once said in order to eat an elephant, cut it into small pieces, and this same advice is sound strategy for collection building. The notion is to divide the collection into a number of small but manageable segments matched to various parts of the curriculum. Rather than build the collection as a whole, build pieces; thus creating a collection tailored specifically for the school it serves.

Briefly, the total collection should be divided into 3 major segments:

- Basic collection designed to serve a wide variety of interests and needs-provides breadth.
- General emphasis collections which support whole courses of instruction such as U. S. History or beginning reading-intermediate depth.
- Specific emphasis collections which support units of instruction such as Civil War or dinosaurs-provide full depth.

Collection mapping, which provides both a qualitative and quantitative picture, combined with the textbook adoption cycle can be useful in developing a plan for collection building on any length cycle convenient for you. Cycles of thematic units for primary programs, whole language/literature-based instruction are additional factors to be considered.

For detailed information see *Collection Mapping: An Evaluation Strategy for Collection Development* by David Loertscher.

© Sally Livingston, Jefferson County Schools, 1997.