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**Summary of**

 **THE MEDIA CENTER: Weeding , From Alphabet Books to Zip Drives**

Weeding of all types of materials is necessary and to not do so is a disservice to students. Quality is more important than quantity. If a book is not going to be checked out because it looks bad, then it is taking up valuable shelf space. The newer, up to date materials stand out more if they are not crowded on the shelves with old materials. Another benefit to discarding old books, is that empty shelf space is noticed and the need for funds are noticed. With the old books gone, the new titles will stand out.

It is vital to include a weeding policy in a collection development policy. Weeding is an ongoing process and generally isn’t done in one chunk of time. Automation systems make it easy to look at circulation reports. This helps make weeding decisions. If a book never leaves the shelf, then it is taking up valuable space. With the old books gone, the new titles will be noticed. Audiovisual and technology usage needs to be tracked as well.

There are media center book vendors that provide collection assessment tools. This is done by exporting your MARC files to online assessment tools which examine the collection. The overall age of different areas can be analyzed. The results can be reviewed through graphs or lists and can be done on a regular basis. Spreadsheets are excellent way to analyze the data. They supply facts that warrant a need for weeding and support for budget requests. They can be created often so the data is up to date.

A good way to begin is by looking at The Weed of the Month. This information is available on the Internet and organized by the Dewey Decimal System. Specific things to look for are given and guidelines are provided. If you use volunteers to help, the article suggests conducting a seminar prior to the task to provide guidelines. Even students can help by finding books that are just in bad condition. The final decision will ultimately be up to the media specialist, but having volunteers help can greatly speed up the process.

 Don’t forget about technology and VHS tapes. Get rid of the stuff that no one ever uses. Some VHS tapes are one of a kind and can still be played on dual DVD and VHS players. It is valuable to hang onto items that are assets to the curriculum and that you still have the equipment to make them of use and the space to store them. If the equipment is one of a kind, it might be worth hanging onto. Another important item to keep is the last copy of a software manual.

Along with weeding comes the disposal of the materials. It was suggested to tear up books and discard them. Books in okay condition should be donated and not sold. They should not be put in classroom with the understanding that if they weren’t good enough for the media center, they shouldn’t be in a classroom. An art teacher may be able to make use of the illustrations. There are stricter guidelines for getting rid of larger equipment and laws must be followed.

The author concludes by stating that she’s never regretted weeding and only wishes she’s weeded more. She goes on to say that some items such as yearbooks, books written alumni, books about the community, and out-of print books should be held onto. Collection development and weeding vary by school and the media specialist is face with a challenge in providing accurate information to the students.