

I spent several days weeding the reference section at the American School of Bombay Secondary library. This section had not been weeded in several years and was due to be weeded for several reasons. First, a significant number were out of date and second the library is low on shelving space. I started out with the guidance of the librarian, who went through the first few books and told me exactly why she would or would not keep a particular book. This was a helpful way to start as I got a sense of what an experienced librarian does and thinks, however, I soon learned I could not rely on a few minutes of observation to weed.

In the end I weeded the entire reference section. Although I only documented about half of what I went through, in total I removed approximately 120 books/sets. The first thing I noticed was how truly time consuming the work is. The more the librarian knows the collection and the purpose of the collection it *may* be easier and/or quicker. In a previous experience, I spent time watching a librarian weed a small section of her library. She has been at the library for nine years, and could quickly tell which books were out of date and which books she had ordered replacements for, making her weeding process a lot faster. I spent a lot of time really looking through the resources, comparing one book to the whole section, and questioning the librarian about whether or not a particular book or set of books fit in with the curriculum. Knowing your collection and mission or purpose will help this process immensely.

In addition to the time I took to weed the books, I know there is even more time involved in removing them from the OPAC and deciding what to do with the books. In this particular case, the librarian will send out an email asking faculty and staff to come and see if they want to add any of the resources to their classroom collection. After that

they will most likely be donated to a local NGO as there are many here in India who would appreciate even our weeded collection.

Another observation about my time weeding is that it was a lot more emotional experience than I expected. I often doubted myself and my motives and had to ask the advice of the librarian on several occasions. As Evans and Zarnosky Saponaro (2005) mentioned, I sometimes got caught up in that feeling of “someone will need it tomorrow” (303). Other times the only reason to weed the book was because no one had used it, and no one was going to use it. In some instances, the book may have been in perfect condition with accurate, up-to-date information. It felt wrong to remove a perfectly good resource, even if it was clearly not being used.

This experience was truly a learning experience and one I’m sure is not sufficient to make me an expert. I expect it will take years or practice to feel more comfortable, although as my librarian said, it never gets less emotional.

Evans, G. E., & Zarnosky Saponaro, M. (2005). Deselection. In *Developing Library and Information Center Collections* (pp. 295-313). Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited.

Title	Low use/low demand	Infested/moldy/dirty/ shabby/brittle paper/missing pages	Unappealing/small print/ heavy/inappropriate reading level	Duplicate/content covered better by other resources	Out of date/superseded	Inaccurate/containing stereotypes	Easy availability from another library	Decision: "weed" or "keep" or "weed and reorder"
Books for You: An annotated Booklist for Senior High Students 1995 Edition					x			Weed
Science Experiment Index for Young People						x		W & Reshelve
Sports, Exercise and Fitness: A guide to Reference and Information Sources						x		W & Reshelve
Ethnic Book Awards: A Directory of Multicultural Literature for Young Readers						x		Weed & Reshelve
Fantasy Literature for Children and Young Adults: A comprehensive guide						x		Weed and Reshelve
Hawthorne, Melville, Stephen Crane: A critical Bibliography		x						Weed and Reshelve
The Hutchinson Encyclopedia		x		x	x			Weed

500 Great Books for TEENS						x		Weed and Reshelve
Encyclopedia Britannica Set		x		x	x	x		Weed
World Almanac for Kids 2005								Keep
World Almanac for Kids 2006								Keep
World Almanac and Book of Facts 2005				x				Weed
Wrld Almanac and Book of Facts 2006 (x40				x				Weed
World Almanac and Book of Facts 2001			x	x	x			Weed
The Dorling Kindersley Children's Illustrated Encyclopedia		x		x	x			Weed
Facts File: The New Joy of Knowledge Encyclopedia		x		x	x			Weed
The everyman Dictionary of Quotations and Provers		x		x	x			Weed
Chambers Dictionary of Quotations								Keep
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations		x		x				Weed
The Dictionary of Humorous Quotations		x						Keep
Holy Bible: King James Version		x						Weed and replace
The World Religions		x			x			Weed

Dictionary of Classical Mythology		x						Weed and replace
The 1998 What Color is your Parachute?		x		x	x			Weed
Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance				x	x			Weed
VGM' s Careers Encyclopedia		x			x			Weed
The Ford Company								Weed and Re-shelve
The Earth Atlas		x			x			Weed
NESA Directory					x			Weed
The ISS Directory of International Schools 03-04					x			Weed
International Schools Directory 2004-2005					x			Weed
The ECIS High Education Directory 2003					x			Weed
The Most Competitive Colleges 2003					x			Weed
The Historical Encyclopedia of Costumes				x				Weed and Re-shelve

Hobson Jobson				x				Weed 1 & Re-shelve 1 & replace 1 with updated copy
The world Book Encyclopedia of Science		x		x	x			Weed
The American Heritage Dictionary of Science					x			Weed & replace
World of Scientific Discovery		x		x				Weed
Atlas of the Universe		x		x				Weed and Re-shelve
Chemistry: Steven Zumdahl				x				Weed and Re-shelve
Chemistry: Steven Zumdahl				x				Weed
The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Earth Sciences				x	x			Weed
The Random House Atlas of the Oceans				x	x			Weed
The Unfolding River		x						Weed
Encyclopedia of Indian Natural History		x						Weed & replace

A century of natural History		x						Weed
The Atlas of the Living World					x			Weed
The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution					x			Weed
The encyclopedia of Underwater Life; Mammals; Reptiles and Insects; Animal Behavior and Biology; Birds; Domestic Animals; Animal Ecology and Evolution; Insects					x			Weed
The American Heritage Dictionary High School x6		x		x	x			Weed
50 books or sets listed above								
70 more books or sets were weeded out of the entire reference section								