

**Where Angels Fear to Tread: Maximizing Your Library's Reference Collection**  
**Central PA K-16 Information Literacy Workshop**  
**April 16, 2008**  
**Schlow Centre Region Library**

**Welcome- Emily Rimland and Ellysa Cahoy**

**“Where Angels Fear to Tread” Presentation by Allison Brungard, Duquesne University and Sandra Collins, Byzantine Catholic Seminary**

Over view of what was put in place--issues/implementation/do's and don'ts for shelf weeding/deselection of materials.  
A committee process vs. “committee of one”

Communication- policy

Undergraduate and public libraries—internet oriented students and kids, touching books less. Reference collections are changing.

At Duquesne, looking at the reference collection as a model for weeding entire library.  
First task, writing a policy – difficult, but vital work.

Things to consider when making the policy-- What do people use? Does the policy reflect use? Include electronic materials as well as print? What users want as well as space concerns. Know why you are doing it. Write policy and communicate it amongst colleagues. A collection on the move... creates an “active” collection, not a stagnant one.

After communicating policy, making it non-negotiable... be FIRM in going ahead.  
Weeding or de-selecting a collection. “de-selecting” to different portions of the collection—

Clear in how it will impact overall collection (purpose of policy)... What will you gain by doing this? “mean and lean reference” moving, dynamic, accessible. The task of the reference collection was to be used.... Must be current and accessible. You don't have to be electronic, it depends on your users—

Clear lines of authority—don't do as a committee.... One or two people in charge. Look to others to help if you are not able to do it all yourself, part timers, board members, etc. Look to your stakeholders--- give them an outlet for communication. Procedure creates anxiety in users as well as professionals.

Technology to support the project is important. Use programs that are comfortable for you—and make it accessible to everyone who has input. Interactive technology is best. This is the easier way to keep a record of project

Set realistic deadlines—get consensus from the group or set for yourself... be flexible and realistic... you can do more than your deadline, but set a deadline that isn't

overwhelming... stay firm to your deadlines. Making decisions is hard work, recognize this. Have contingency plans. ... people will go on vacation, get sick, etc. make everyone aware of procedures. Follow-through and clarity are key. Be thoughtful, be clear... make decisions when others can't by policy. ... let them know that by deadlines, if a decision hasn't been made a decision will be made to move the collection forward

Implementation of how it worked at Duquesne

Reference area is the main floor—busy area... users want a quieter area. 30 rows of reference books, 7000 books. Small storage facilities... needs change to implement policies.

Decisions answer to the overall policy.. Reference Department Collection Development and Weeding Policy.

Created an Access database of all reference titles (exported from library catalog). Allowed for tracking by name, title, etc. and was portable and could be shared amongst all project participants... subject specialists would take on range of LC call numbers to assist in de-selection. Within Access there were 3 decisions – keep, withdraw, move (provide drop down option for locations) Pull reports based on move ... and worked with cataloging department and circulation, etc. Student employees did reshelving, pulling, etc.

Allow for some flexibility, but provide firm dates for decision making.... Moved 55% withdrew 10% and kept 35%... only withdrew ~ 600 of 7000 books.

Some DON'Ts we learned along the way—

- Assume everyone is on board, faculty, etc.  
Didn't always like the three choices for deselecting... left notes instead of making a decision.  
Look at what your library should be having a strong collection in... does it support your user's needs?
- Assume everyone views your role the same way... cataloging, collection development, and circulation are affected by the weeding decisions. Be sensitive and communicate with those who may also be involved or who your project might create work for. You can't tell who might react somehow. Students and faculty were accepting, internally faced more challenges.
- Money is always a problem. Don't assume that there is money for everything that you want. A lot is available electronically, but the price of this is very high!  
Prioritize what could be electronic and will be best utilized vs. what is purchased in paper.

Create a process for reconsiderations. Send faculty a list of withdrawals if people want to look at what has been considered. Moving the books is a long process!

This project hadn't been done before... realized that most volumes weren't being used at all. This was a pilot project for one collection... which will hopefully transfer to the rest of the library. Forces people to make decisions/action.

Continual re-evaluation is important... what is relevant now might not be relevant in a few years OR some things should be able to be circulated instead of being involved in a "ready-reference" function.

What issues does the group face?

- How do you deal with difficult personalities or people who have completely different views?
  - Open up lines of communication, take responsibility for mistakes, be willing to share ownership—others want to give input, but not the responsibility.
  - Be willing to compromise.

Did this motivate others?

Not so much.... No one takes this on willingly. And this kind of process takes homework and a lot of consideration. ... policy is important. It also lets you start small, sets you up for success.

Part of the effort is just making more of the collection circulate... Some are books we as libraries love, but they don't circulate much.

Included is a reading list... Less is More--- helpful resource.... Rightsizing Your Reference Collection... (Baltimore Country Public Library system)

Group: Has anyone recently done this?

In a small library system, people are apprehensive... recently weeded library (hadn't been done in 25 years) and threw away lots of books... parents called. Also, some put out books on carts and said "Free to good home" and cut down on # of throw aways. AAUW book sale is a possibility... one librarian weeded when all the books came back at the end of semester cause the books no longer fit on shelves. ... and then offered them up to school faculty by a certain date.... Make sure to mark them withdrawn. Schedule weeding projects in association with another need (facilities projects, etc.)... Think of it as not weeding—deselecting to a new location. Not devaluing the book, just relocating. Made an order for getting rid of books... faculty first, local bookstores, etc.

There is an organization called Better World Books.... Pay for boxes, shipping, etc... will take your discarded books!

Questions about weeding reference collection?

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*Break for lunch*

## **Moving Forward/Looking Ahead**

Anne Betts—Information Literacy Workshop “No More Boring Reports” —coming up soon! Two day workshop in June for 30 ACT 48 hours. For all educators!

Hand outs from Schlow—One Book PA, ASKPA--- do you use it? Are you familiar with it? It's a 24/7 live service—PA librarians staff the service. Only librarians answer these questions... heavily used by young adults (middle school/high school)/ works a lot with online research. Co-browsing is available.

Statewide K-16 Program in Maryland

Diane Harvey—Undergraduate Studies Librarian, University of Maryland

Trying to understand what students are learning in middle school and high school, particularly about academic integrity and information literacy.

Starting three years ago, created a mechanism to communicate with counterparts in middle and high schools with a Leadership Issues. . . . K-12 librarians, administrators, college librarians, etc... working together on expectations for higher ed. and K-12.

Looking to see if curriculum is aligned, what is the acceptable use policy, etc. ....

Recently, the state governor created a P-20 council to look at the education system and making them look towards workforce education, etc. Statewide level, but no local programs have been established.

Ellysa Cahoy, Penn State University Libraries—Information Literacy Standards (AASL)

New learning standards were introduced in 2007

Project and describe information literacy for the coming years.

Coming soon (June)—Assessment strategies/activities

The role and importance of the school library or librarian isn't emphasized in these standards... information literacy is becoming globalized—everyone is a stakeholder in information literacy. BUT school librarians are a KEY player and can't be marginalized.

Common Beliefs—learning has a social context, sharing in content creation

Pg. 4—Standards—each lists skills, opportunities, self- assessment, and dispositions in action (emotional skills). . . first time to address student's emotions in the research process

How does one access this?

Dan Hood—Pittsburgh Public School District, worked on creating some standards of assessment for emotional skills—affective skills. How do students feel about these skills both online and in person. Will send to list-serve. Spent 6 days in person plus email communication to create.

International Society for Technology in Education – NETS (National Education Technology for Students)

Followed same timeline as AASL

6 major principles for their standards including information fluency

ISTE Doug Johnson AASL created a bubble of the crossover of these two standards

Can be great for creating conversation with colleagues involved with technology

Information Literacy Standards from ACRL ... last produced in 2000  
Might make a K-20 set of standards... but should be updating soon.

Comments/Questions?

- Pittsburgh Project is doing a presentation at PSLA in a few weeks... scope and sequence
- One school district has 'technology coaches' that have incorporated these standards

**What are the next future directions? Want to join planning group? What topics are interesting to you?**

Facebook?

iGoogle—RSS feeds, widgets, web mash-ups—customizing your searches, customizing your webspace... pulling from other websites to information that you want to use regularly ... also good for students cause it lets students access their information more easily by utilizing pages they find most information

Would technology be a good topic? Emerging technologies are often free and so many people can access them. Sharing of our free software ideas and resources. Show and tell of different free tech resources??

Free tech tools to bring to your library.

Information Literacy/Gaming

Interactive – flash, Jing, splashcast, Camtasia... creating presentations for free online.

Please let us know your feedback!