

# Collection Development Basics

## Course

---

### Maintaining Your Collection [8:00]

[https://players.brightcove.net/2566261579001/HyuWsfFhb\\_default/index.html?videoId=5516054045001](https://players.brightcove.net/2566261579001/HyuWsfFhb_default/index.html?videoId=5516054045001)

#### About

You really have to be vigilant in maintaining your collection. If you let it go one year without an inventory or weeding plan, the work just multiplies.

#### Transcript

Ordering and purchasing your books doesn't just take one day. It's an ongoing process, and as your purchases are coming in, it's important to process them and get them out where your patrons can use them.

Processing may just be adding the books to your media management system-- especially if it's ebooks, or making sure that teachers get that document camera that you ordered especially for them--but all items have to be processed some way so that you can find them when you need them.

I'm sure you know all about how to process books. They have to be covered, and I use covers for hardbacks, but I also laminate paperbacks to increase their longevity. I've heard that paperbacks last through seven readings and you can double that if you laminate the cover.

Then they have to be barcoded and a date due card must be attached. A spine label must be affixed after you determine the Dewey number. Whether you use strict Dewey Decimal System or you genrefy your collection, items still must be marked in some way so that students can find them. Some libraries like to put labels on their books, like as to the genre or maybe the reading level. You have to get all this done, and the easiest way to get all this processing done correctly is to ask your vendor to process it for you. There's usually a small fee, but it's well worth it. Your time is worth that small charge, because this is such a labor intensive task. Then you must upload all the information to your media management system.

At sometime during the year, you have to weed your collection. This is one of the hardest things for librarians to do. It's so hard to part with items that we've taken time to find and purchase and publicize. We know the money's tight, but it's so much better to have newer, more accurate items on your shelves than to have books that are out of date and that give misinformation. If you aren't sure which books to weed, look at guidelines. Guidelines are really easy to find online and they should be part of your collection development plan. Guidelines aren't hard and fast rules, but they do give you an idea as to what the standard is. They usually make pretty good sense. After five years, a technology book really is outdated. You may have to keep yours longer because of budget restraints, but at least you know what the ideal is for weeding.

You might also like to run an analysis of your collection so you can see what areas that you have that are lacking, and also what's been checked out in past years. You can use your media management software, or you can use vendor websites to do this. Sometimes you can narrow your search field to something like, "books that have never been checked out." Those kinds of books, maybe you want to publicize them to get them the circulation they need. But if that doesn't work, why do you have them on your shelves?

I know it's hard to give up some of those well-worn children's books that you know the kids love, but if it's falling apart, just buy another one. You could have an Adopt a Book Night, maybe in connection with Open House. Maybe parents will buy new copies and they can take home the old copy. Some schools ask parents to donate books after their kids graduate, graduate 6th grade, or graduate 8th grade, or graduate high school. Then the librarian will put a note in the book that the book was donated by a specific student, and it becomes part of the collection forever. Well, almost forever.

I think the best way to do that really is to ask for a donation from the parent, and then you buy the book that you need. Sometimes if you just ask the parents to get books, then they all buy the same books. Or they might even give you a book that's really not appropriate for your age level.

Once after a major weeding, one of my middle school kids said, "Hey, where'd you get all the new books?" I hadn't bought any new books. They could just see the bright new books because they weren't buried between all those worn copies.

One problem we all have is finding the time to weed. We're usually so busy putting out fires and teaching kids every day, we don't have time to spend an hour or two a day weeding. It might be easier if you come up with a chart, a weeding chart that gives you a focus area each year so you don't feel like you have to cover the entire library every year. Choose a few Dewey numbered areas to weed. This year, I weeded the 500s, that's science and math, and the 700s, which is art and sports and leisure activities. I also did part of fiction, G through M. Next year, I'll move on to other areas. Eventually, maybe in five years, the whole library will have been weeded.

Then the problem is what do you do with those weeded books? You don't want to give them to another school. If they weren't good enough for your school, why would you want to give them to another school? That's not right. If they have lots of pictures, the teachers may be able to use those pictures, because they're still pictures of real things, even if the content is no longer accurate. Our district has a vendor who will pick up used books and pay us for them by weight. Considering how much books cost, we know that's not very much, but every quarter helps.

I take all that back that I just said if you're weeding multiple copies. Because then it's just that you have too many on your shelf. You could give them to teachers for classroom libraries. You can have a little book sale to your kids for a small fee, if your district is okay with that. Or you can just give them away free. I have a Free Cart in the library and I put a few books on there every day, and they disappear every day.

Each year, you must complete an inventory. With digital media management systems, it's really not very difficult. It's time consuming, but it's not very difficult. It's really important to know what you have. Make sure you don't close the library when you inventory. Just do it during the school year. It's so much easier. All your circulating items are immediately set to found, so you only have to deal with what's not circulating.

Parents and students can help with inventory, too. We just set up a laptop with a scanner, and we send them to every shelf. They scan the book or the equipment or the class set, and it's immediately uploaded into our media management system. We can use our percentage of found books to know how well we're doing. We see it go up every day and it makes us feel really good.

The most difficult part of inventory, is looking at lost items and trying to find them. Have your volunteers or your students help. It's really a problem-solving activity. It's sort of like a scavenger hunt for the students. You could ask them, "Where do you think that fiction book could be?" Maybe it got shelved in Biography by accident. Or maybe that nonfiction book, people didn't even notice the numbers and just shelved it by the call numbers, so it's in the fiction section. It'll be very exciting when you find those books that you've lost.

You really have to be vigilant in maintaining your collection. If you let it go one year without an inventory or weeding plan, your job just multiplies. Now if you just started in a library that has not been maintained, that has to be your first priority so that others can find resources and so that you create an atmosphere that really entices all of your patrons to use what you have.

Activities

## **Build Perspectives on Inventory**

### **Context:**

Maintaining the library collection encompasses numerous tasks, including processing and shelving materials, weeding (with collection analysis as part of this effort), discarding deselected materials, and doing inventory. Franklin emphasizes ongoing, vigilant maintenance of the collection. These maintenance tasks all contribute to the desired outcome of making resources easy to find, appealing, and useful across a range of patrons' needs. Note that this lesson describes weeding; for more detailed information on weeding, see [Weeding for Success](#), a course by Jeannette Larson.

### **Instructions:**

The topic of school library inventory can be a divisive one, with opinions ranging from inventory as an essential task to beliefs that it's a job that just takes too much time. For helpful and innovative suggestions on inventory, read the article by Melissa Purcell and Amy Bradley, "[Inventory for the School Library: Do You Know Your Stuff?](#)" found in the Resources below.

After reading, reflect on these strategies and your current beliefs and practices about inventory. Note some reflections, with these questions as possible prompts:

- What is one new perspective or benefit you learned from this article?
- Why is inventory important?
- How is inventory related to collection development?

- What concerns do you have about inventory? Who or what are resources to support you?

**Resources:**



Entry ID: 2128227

**Article**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Additional Reading.](#)

MLA CITATION

Franklin, Patricia. "Collection Development Basics. Maintaining Your Collection [8:00]." *School Library Connection*, ABC-CLIO, August 2017, [schoollibraryconnection.com/Home/Display/2081081?learningModuleId=2081075](https://schoollibraryconnection.com/Home/Display/2081081?learningModuleId=2081075).

<https://schoollibraryconnection.com/Home/Display/2081081?learningModuleId=2081075>

Entry ID: 2081081