



@ your library!

AASL Exploratorium

October 6, 2005 -- 1:00 pm, CC301-305

Have you ever inherited a mess of a library? Are you overwhelmed by chaos, no apparent organization, or an ancient collection? Help every student succeed by transforming the library into a welcoming, organized environment. Learn how to evaluate needs, prioritize tasks, and create a quality library in no time.

Many school libraries have been neglected over the past decade because of less professional coverage, budget cuts, and lack of administrative support. But when a library is revived, the first thing is to hire a librarian to tackle the mess left by the neglect. If you're that librarian who is supposed to turn the library and the library program around, what do you do? The first step into the library may be overwhelming – a mess of books, papers, supplies, equipment, furniture. It may be difficult to see the potential when the quality of a library is lost because it is a disorganized mess...or hasn't been weeded in years. Use the resources we've provided on our website to help you step back, take a deep breath, assess the strengths & weaknesses of a library, list and prioritize the tasks, enlist help, and turn the "mess" into a welcoming library where each student can succeed. Resources include customizable checklists, flow charts, and other support documents. Also included are creative ideas for recycling items that no longer belong fit the library's needs.

The ideas shared here come from our own experiences as we have cleaned up 8 "inherited" libraries and helped prioritize tasks for cleanup at over 30 other libraries. There is treasure under the clutter, and it can be fun hunting for it. We hope that you will be able to replicate a "clean sweep" the next time you "inherit" a neglected library.

Resources: See customizable weeding flowchart, evaluation checklist, and other documents at

<http://members.cox.net/library411/aasl>

- Weeding as Collection Development
- Program Evaluation
- Library Environment
- Recycling Efforts

Web Resources

Weed

- ❑ SUNLINK Weed of the Month Club <http://www.sunlink.ucf.edu/weed/>
- ❑ Weeding the Library Collection <http://www.wmrls.org/services/colldev/weeding.html>
- ❑ Weeding the School Library brochure
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/lb/documents/schoollibweedng.pdf>

Recycle old books

- ❑ MIT: Building with Books http://theory.csail.mit.edu/classes/bookbuild/davis_bench.html
- ❑ Turning books into other items <http://www.thisintothat.com/index.html>
- ❑ Book Purse Tutorial
<http://sewing.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.rudehouse.com/Arystocrafts/craft%5Fpages/purses.html>
- ❑ Recycled Hardcover Book Purse
http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/cr_accessories_purses/article/0,1789,HGTV_3227_3661732,00.html
- ❑ How to Make an Altered CD Book <http://www.altered-book.com/CD-book.html>
- ❑ Altered Books Lesson Plan (turn old books into collaborative units!)
<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/middle/Linda-books.htm>
- ❑ What is an Altered Book? <http://www.lisavollrath.com/articles/016.html>

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Special thanks to TLC's Clean Sweep for lots of inspiration! <http://tlc.discovery.com/fansites/cleansweep/cleansweep.html>

Clean Sweep @ your library -- Tips for Success!

You have a library to clean up, but where do you start?
Use these tips to find success!

○ Evaluate the situation

- Use the rubrics in Planning Guide to Information Power to assess the library program, facility, and collection. Come up with an overall plan of action to guide the “Clean Sweep” process.
 - Program (What has been done before? Who? Schedule? Collaboration? PD?)
 - Physical environment (Space allocation, Office, Closets, Circulation Desk, Furniture, Curtains, Walls)
 - Collection
 - If automated, run an analysis such as Follett Library Resources’ [TitleWise](#).
 - If not automated, take a quick look at the quality, quantity, condition, and curricular support.

○ Enlist Administration Support

- Administrator needs to understand the situation & the implications.
- When you talk to the principal about library needs, have solid data in your hands and talk about student achievement.
- Request any district or school policies & procedures regarding disposal of assets (old furniture, library books, etc.)

○ Create a list of tasks

- List everything you can think of that needs to be fixed or done.
- Prioritize the tasks
- Start small, but be successful...everyone wants to be associated with success.

○ Weed / Toss

- Help the custodian understand that it’s ok to throw away some books.
- Enlist teachers to help weed sections that pertain to their curricular areas & request suggestions for acquisitions.
- You may need to be ruthless! Be courageous! If 60% of the collection needs to be weeded, do it.
- Create a need. New books will not be purchased when the shelves are full!
- Save choice specimens to illustrate the value of weeding (There are only 48 states? East & West Germany? Martin Luther King, Jr. is still alive?)

○ Clean

- Invest in rubber gloves, masks, antibacterial wipes.
- Request large bins for trash and boxes for recycling.
- Go through every desk drawer and every closet shelf. Throw out & organize as you go.
- Save only catalogs that you know with absolute certainty you will use.
- Get rid of all but a month or two of magazines – give them away to teachers.
- Enlist custodial help for large tasks and for emptying trash daily.
- Use a mask if there’s any evidence of mildew, dust, insect or animal remains.
- Request immediate help in identifying mold and dealing with it properly.

○ **Recycle / Collaborate**

- Purchase a “Withdrawn” self-inking stamp. Request that anyone who wants one of the withdrawn items may take it –all they need to do is stamp it first and discard any book cards.
- Offer items to teachers for use in collage, altered books, or other projects.
- Design collaborative lessons with teachers that use weeded/discarded materials
 - Art: altered books, altered trading cards (from old card catalog cards).
 - Science: grow and identify bacteria on found objects
 - Science or History/Geography: find misinformation in old science, geography, or history books, and research the changes that have taken place. Create documentation that supports the choice to withdraw the books from the collection.
 - Writing/Language Arts: altered books, poetry collages

○ **Spruce up the Space**

- Add color – walls, curtains, floor.
- Add interest – posters, student work, feature displays, collections.
- Add signage
- Create inviting spaces for individual reading, storytelling, small group work – cozy chairs, story rug, rocking chair, etc.

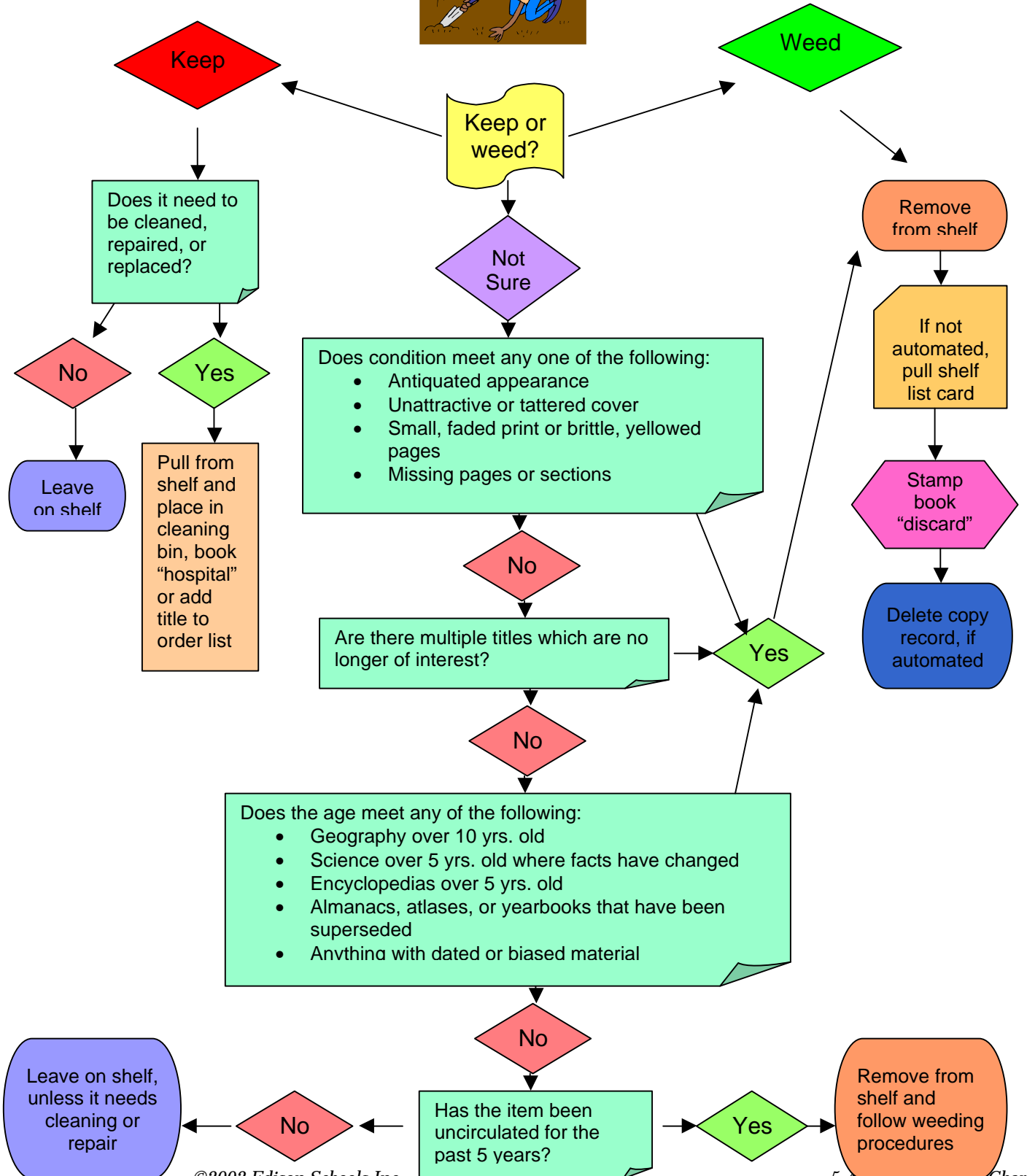
○ **Celebrate!**

- Invite families & community to a grand opening with lots of festive programming! Celebrate your success!
- Implement innovative & collaborative programming that integrates information literacy throughout all curricular areas so that the library is the hub of the school.

○ **Throughout the Process**

- Have a purpose, or reason, based on research for everything you do.
- Find another librarian to share joys and woes...be professional with everyone else...they won't understand anyway.
- Be positive, but firm.
- Be your own person. Change something, but glean the good from what you find.
- Use the Dewey system! It has been used for many years for good reason!
- Be a service provider to both teachers & students.
- Jump in whenever you get even the tiniest opportunity to collaborate.
- Really knock their socks off. Give 'em “above and beyond”, so when you do have to draw the line, you can.
- Base everything on AASL standards, research regarding best practices and your state standards.
- Teach everyone about the importance of a dynamic library collection.
- When the staff starts talking about the previous librarian, stick to the idea that you are each different, but you are both OK!
- Take time to reflect. Be Quiet...sit and think.
- Remember the Hare & Tortoise: Slow, but steady wins the race!
- Celebrate every step of the way!
- Give your administrator a weekly update. Keep it short & to the point. Bulleted items are good.

Weeding the library



How to Make an Encyclopedia Bench



Equipment Needed:

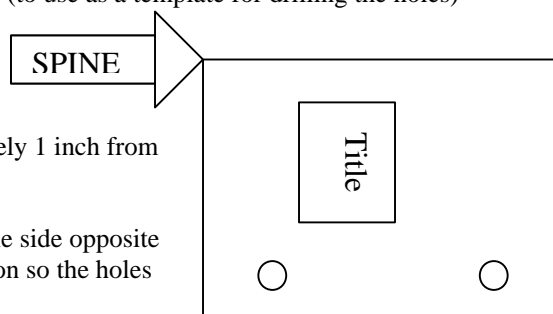
- Heavy-duty electric drill with a sharp 1/2" wood bit. (Warning: cordless drills may not have the power needed; I used a corded hammer drill to get the right power.)
- 2 clamps
- Heavy-duty wrenches

Materials Needed:

- one (or 2) old sets of encyclopedias
- two 72" all-thread rods (sometimes called threaded rods) Use 3/8" or 7/16" diameter that is slightly smaller than the drilled hole so it slides in easily.
- 4 nuts to fit above rods
- 4 extra large 2" washers to fit above rods
- 4 rubber end caps (or metal cap nuts) to fit above rods
- spacers (to fit in-between each encyclopedia volume to help define the arch; select folded newspaper, old readers digests, old skinny paperbacks, etc.)
- 1/2" thick scrap lumber about the size of an encyclopedia volume (to use as a template for drilling the holes)

Directions:

- Make a wood template
 - Cut to size of encyclopedia volume.
 - Mark & drill two 1/2" holes in the template, approximately 1 inch from edge.
- Drill holes in encyclopedia volumes
 - Align the template to one of the volumes (with the spine side opposite the holes. Always place the volume in the same direction so the holes will align later.)
 - Be sure to align the hole side of the template to the open part of the book (opposite the spine)
 - Tightly clamp the template and book to a workbench (you must clamp tightly to get a good clean hole; if loose, it will chew up the pages and leave a messy hole)
 - Drill the holes, making sure to drill completely through
 - Repeat for each volume.
- Assemble the bench
 - Align the volumes in order
 - Thread the two rods through the volumes
 - Slide the spacers in-between each volume. (They should rest on top of the rods and align below the encyclopedia spines)
 - Place the washers and nuts on the end of each rod
 - Tighten the nuts. (This will require one person on the end of each rod. Alternate rods until desired tightness is achieved.)
 - Cut off the end of the rods and cap with rubber or cap nuts to protect library patrons and the floor



Note: The curvature is determined by a combination of spacer thickness and the amount of tightness.

For this bench: Most of the spacers were placed toward the sides rather than the center so that the bench was slightly flat on top. We used Styrofoam in the example as a temporary safety fix, but the final product must have the rods cut and capped.

Options: While we used a large set of 1961 Britannica with 10 yearbooks and a 2-volume dictionary, you can achieve a similar affect with two sets of World Book Encyclopedias. When using 2 sets, color-coordinate or alternate colors. You can even place one set to read in one direction and the other in the opposite direction – just remember to align them to the template in the same way so the holes are correctly drilled.

Instructions by Esther K Eash, 2005 --- Based on images posted on MIT website:

http://theory.scail.mit.edu/classes/bookbuild/davis_bench.html