

Developing your library collection

by Susan Moroz

Of the many wonderful things about being a teacher-librarian, one of the most enjoyable is building a library collection. In lay terms this means that you get to buy books with others' money. Purchasing, however, is just one aspect of collection development. Duties such as evaluation, mapping, weeding, repair, and selection are all part of collection development.

For a comprehensive listing of articles on the above aspects of collection development consider the links offered by Resources for School Librarians and School Library Information Portal at:

- ◆ www.sldirectry.com/libsf/resf/coldev2.html
- ◆ www.cla.ca/slip/management.htm

IN THE BEGINNING

"It does not matter how many books you may have, but whether they are good or not." - Lucius Annaeus Seneca (3 B.C.-65 A.D.), *Epistolae Morale*

Before making any collection development or maintenance purchases, it is essential that you know your collection. One of the best ways to acquaint yourself with your books, especially if the collection is fairly new to you, is to weed it. This will allow you to conduct an informal gap analysis while you update your collection.

WEEDING:

- ◆ Ensures the collection is accurate, current and relevant to the curricular and recreation needs of your school community
- ◆ Facilitates access to quality resources
- ◆ Removes the outward illusion of a well-stocked collection (hopefully loosening the purse strings)
- ◆ Ensures the resources are appropriate to your school program

On a note of caution, weeding can be very controversial. It

is best if your board establishes weeding criteria. If there is no policy in place, draft one for approval before beginning. The Winnipeg School Division has a section of its handbook devoted to weeding which provides some of the rationale cited above as well as comprehensive considerations for weeding. It can be found at

www.wsd1.org/PC_LMS/Handbook/forms/weeding.pdf

COLLECTION MAPPING

The term collection mapping is fairly self-explanatory. It is a process whereby you collect data on your present, weeded collection to determine areas where purchases are needed. Several Web and print resources exist for assisting teacher-librarians with mapping their collections. One of the most interesting resources I came across was LibMap a Collection Development tool developed for Australian School Libraries based on the eight key learning areas of the Western Australian Curriculum Framework. LibMap allows you to analyze your collection by creating an electronic collection map, which can be printed straight from LibMap or exported as a