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## The Weeding Handbook: A Shelf-by-Shelf Guide, 2nd edition

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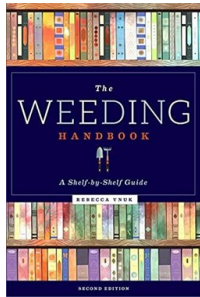
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***The Weeding Handbook: A Shelf-by-Shelf Guide, 2nd edition***



Rebecca Vnuk  
Chicago: ALA Editions, 2022  
ISBN: 9780838937174  
240 p. \$49.99 (Pbk)

“A Library,” writes author Rebecca Vnuk “is an ever-changing organism” and “weeding helps a library thrive” (p. xv). In *The Weeding Handbook*, Vnuk, Executive Director for LibraryReads and a former editor for collection management and library outreach at *Booklist* magazine, notes that “libraries (particularly public libraries) are not—and never have been—archives. There simply is not enough space to hang on to every book and every item” (p. xv). Intended for school and public librarians, the purpose of *The Weeding Handbook* is to “give the reader a good grounding in how and why to weed library collections” (p. xx) and to “give library staff the knowledge and confidence needed to effectively weed any collection of any size” (p. xxi). The shelf-specific chapters are written by Dewey-area, not Library of Congress Classification and are based on the “Weeding Tips” column that was published in the e-newsletter *Corner Shelf*. While the author worked at *Booklist*, she was in charge of *Corner Shelf*.

In the Acknowledgements section, the author comments that the free online publication, [CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries](#), “is the true bible of weeding and should be obtained and read by every staff member involved in weeding collections” (p. ix). In the 1970s, the CREW method was created by Joseph P. Segal and Belinda Boon of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and was revised and updated by Jeanette Larson in 2012 to include a section on e-books. “CREW” stands for **C**ontinuous **R**eview, **E**valuation, and **W**eeding and, using the acronym “MUSTIE,” offers six guidelines that can be used to evaluate materials for weeding: **M**isleading, **U**gly, **S**uperseded, **T**rivial, **I**rrelevant, and **E**lsewhere.

First published in 2015, *The Weeding Handbook* is now in its second edition. In the Introduction, Vnuk states that “based on user feedback and reviews, [she has] thoroughly examined

the shelf-by-shelf advice and made adjustments where readers felt things could be made more general (mostly material age considerations) and added tips throughout reflecting diversity and inclusion and budgetary issues” (p. xix). New to this edition are a series of interviews conducted with library staff about their weeding philosophies and experience and a chapter on diversity and inclusion.

The book is divided into thirteen chapters and also has an appendix. In addition to a shelf-by-shelf guide for Dewey Classifications 000 to 900, *The Weeding Handbook* contains helpful tips on weeding fiction, biographies, and Youth Collections, and other areas of library collections including reference; physical media, such as audiobooks, DVDs, and music CDs; magazines and newspapers; e-books; and databases.

In the chapter on diversity and inclusion, the author suggests that libraries need to consider whether items in their collections “represent diverse people of different cultures, ethnicities, gender identities, physical abilities, races, religions, and sexual orientation” (p. 105) and that diversity and inclusion should be part of both the selection and the deselection processes. “Libraries,” remarks Vnuk, “would do well to remember the first ‘M’ in MUSTIE: *Misleading*. CREW goes even further to define that “material that contains biased, racist, or sexist terminology or views should be weeded” (p. 106). She writes that “most weeding policies/procedures should be updated with a statement regarding diversity and inclusion and where those intersect with weeding” (p. 107). This timely chapter concludes with a list of selected resources on diverse collections and diversity audits.

*The Weeding Handbook* also has chapters on horror stories about weeding, including suggestions for communicating with patrons about weeding projects and on collection development plans. Vnuk says that plans are important when making decisions about weeding and states that “having a plan in place puts everyone on the same page....Although it can’t tell you what individual titles to keep, it can give you firm guidelines of what should—and shouldn’t—remain on your shelves” (p. 111). The book’s appendix consists of an updated list of eight sample collection development plans from school media centers, public, and academic libraries that are also freely accessible

online.

Well written and authoritative, this second edition of *The Weeding Handbook* also contains an index and a suggested reading section of books, articles, and web sites. Although geared toward school and public librarians, academic librarians may find the sample collection development plans and information on material age considerations and weeding Youth Collections useful, especially for those libraries that have juvenile collections. Readers interested in other recent resources on weeding may also consider Francisca Goldsmith's *Crash Course in Weeding Library Collections* (2016). Vnuk's excellent book is an essential purchase for school and public libraries and is highly recommended for academic libraries, too. Whether a librarian is a veteran weeder or is working on a first weeding project, *The Weeding Handbook* has something for everyone.

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