

YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Annual Conference, New Orleans  
June 24 - 28, 2011

**Topic:** Research Agenda Next Steps

**Background:** In 2009 YALSA's Research Committee was tasked with updating YALSA's Research Agenda, which was last updated in 1994. The goal was to create a document that would direct and promote research in the field of young adult librarianship. The committee submitted a draft agenda to the Board in June 2010 and the Board asked for revisions. In the fall of 2010, the President, Board Liaison and Executive Director worked with the committee to come up with a new template for the agenda as well as a timeline for completion. In the spring, Research Committee members as well as other contributors used the template to draft a document. A revised draft is provided below for the Board's consideration.

**Action Required:** Action

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**Proposal:** Accept the draft agenda and open up a call for public comments.

**Rationale:**

- Seeking feedback about the draft document can help ensure that the document thoroughly addresses needed areas and is written in a manner that the library and academic communities can relate to and understand
- Seeking feedback can help create buy-in for the document from among the library and academic communities
- Seeking feedback can help raise awareness about the document as well as increase awareness of YALSA's role in guiding and promoting research for the profession

**Requested Action:**

- Accept the draft document and direct the Research Committee to work with staff to open up and promote a call for public comments in July and August.
- Direct the Research Committee to revisit the document in Sept. after the comment period is closed, incorporate feedback, as appropriate, and submit a final version to the Executive Committee by Oct 1<sup>st</sup> to consider at their Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

**Additional Resources:**

- YALSA's existing Research Agenda:  
[www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/aboutyalsa/yalsaresearch.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/aboutyalsa/yalsaresearch.cfm)
- YALSA's Draft 2012 – 2016 Research Agenda (see pages 3-25 of this document)
- Mapping out a Research Agenda: [www.cs.rutgers.edu/~ryder/NSEFS503.pdf](http://www.cs.rutgers.edu/~ryder/NSEFS503.pdf) (.pdf)

- MLA Research Agenda committee guidelines:  
[http://mlanet.org/research/agenda\\_2008.html](http://mlanet.org/research/agenda_2008.html)
- Sample research agendas:
  - [www.cdc.gov/injury/researchagenda/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/researchagenda/index.html)
  - [www.cal.org/caela/esl\\_resources/agenda.pdf](http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/agenda.pdf) (.pdf)

## **YALSA Research Agenda, May 27<sup>th</sup> draft**

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increase in the formats available. Graphic materials along with digital content are now a part of a teen's and a library's collection. With this rise in the number of materials and formats, librarians serving teens must continue to hone their skills in order to understand how to match the right item to the right teen. Understanding the ways in which teens relate to reading material and the formats in which that material are available, is required in order to serve the young adult population successfully.

A key component of successful young adult library services is the ability to advocate for a strong program. Strength in a young adult program requires adequate funding and staffing, along with up-to-date collections, and ongoing continuing education of staff. An important tool in one's ability to advocate for these is access to up-to-date data that demonstrates the value of a high-quality library program to young adults and describes how a commitment to such a program provides a high return on investment, demonstrated by literate and successful young adults.

The YALSA Research Agenda was developed by members of the association's Research Committee. This group of library educators, working in graduate schools of library science across the United States, surveyed the field to determine gaps in research and determine the questions that needed to be answered in order to fill those gaps. The research called for in this agenda, when completed, will help guarantee that librarians serving young adults are able to provide the best service possible as well as advocate for funding and support in order to ensure teens are served effectively by their libraries.

The authors of the agenda focused on four priority areas for research: impact of library services, reading and resources, information seeking behaviors and needs, and informal and formal learning environments and young adults.

## **Research Agenda**

### **Priority Area 1: Impact of Library Services on Young Adults**

#### **Description/Summary of Topic**

In order to advocate for and support high-quality young adult services in public libraries, librarians, administrators and policy makers need to have access to current data that speaks to the impact of the library program on adolescent development, literacy, college and work readiness, and so on. However, while there are many venues, from professional literature to social media, for those serving young adults to learn about best practices, there is very little data on the current status of young adult services, including staffing, budgets, collections, programs, and so on. Data is also lacking on the role of young adult library services within the overall library program or its impact on communities. It is this lack of data that priority 1 of the research agenda addresses.

In their 2007 study, the Public Library Association found that only 51 percent of public libraries have a full-time young adult services librarian. Sixty-two percent of these libraries have at least one staff person whose job it is specifically to serve teens. These numbers are important to know, but they do not supply important information on tany correlation between a full-time young adult services librarian and adolescent development or literacy skills. Making the

connection through up-to-date statistics is key to a librarian's ability to advocate for higher levels of staffing for teens in libraries.

Specific corollary data is also missing when it comes to library programs for young adults and the impact they have on literacy skills, asset development (such as those articulated by the Search Institute in the 40 Developmental Assets document), and post high-school readiness. Librarians who would like to expand their programs and/or gain support for a summer reading program, and extend technology-based programs need information on how programmatic library activities have a positive impact on young adults.

Data is also not available on how training for professional young adult services librarians helps to guarantee that the young adult library program is valuable and meeting the educational, informational, and recreational needs of young adults. Without statistics that demonstrate that a professionally trained young adult services librarian adds value to a community, it is difficult to advocate for inclusion of that type of position in a library's budget.

As there is currently not a high level of statistical data related to young adult services and their impact on teens educationally and developmentally, this area of the YALSA Research Agenda seeks to expand librarian's and community member's abilities to advocate for well-rounded and well-staffed young adult services.

### **Research Questions**

1. In difficult economic times anecdotal evidence suggests that one of the first areas of library service that is cut is service to young adults. This has an impact on the ability of a library to provide staffing, space, collections, and services to the age group, which can then have an impact on the development and literacy







- b. To what extent are new and multiple perspectives being represented?
  - c. What themes and topics are emerging?
  - d. To what extent does the current body of young adult literature adequately meet the needs of today's diverse teens?
2. How are young adults' reading skills and behaviors changing?
    - a. To what extent are reading behaviors changing in response to the proliferation of formats (especially digital formats)?
    - b. How can the reading skills of low literacy young adults, English language learners, and reluctant readers be enhanced?
    - c. How can new advances in brain science research be applied to promoting reading skills and enhancing reading pleasure among young adults?
  3. How can librarians best promote reading to address the informational, recreational, and developmental needs of young adults?
    - a. How can librarians develop collections that will best address the informational, recreational, and developmental needs of young adults?
    - b. What programs represent best practices in promoting reading among young adults?
    - c. How can librarians best insure access to a variety of materials for young adults in the face of challenges to intellectual freedom?

**Reference**

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**Priority Area 3: Information Seeking Needs and Behavior of Young Adults**



- c. How do factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, gender, socio-economic status,







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#### **Bibliography**

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(2006-2009) is available at <http://www.yalsa.org/research/>

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**Appendix A**  
**Web-Based Presentations and Videos**

**Libraries and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Webinar**

[http://sas-origin.onstreammedia.com/origin/instituteofmuseum/\[Inbox\]/21C\\_Webinar.mp4](http://sas-origin.onstreammedia.com/origin/instituteofmuseum/[Inbox]/21C_Webinar.mp4)

This webinar, sponsored by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), looks at how librarians are integrating 21<sup>st</sup> century skills acquisition into their program of service.

**MacArthur Foundation Channels on YouTube**

[www.youtube.com/user/macfound#g/c/B8379ACAB9E40DB5](http://www.youtube.com/user/macfound#g/c/B8379ACAB9E40DB5)

[www.youtube.com/user/macfound#g/c/7BC4983C244FF952](http://www.youtube.com/user/macfound#g/c/7BC4983C244FF952)

Each of these YouTube playlists includes a variety of video presentations on how teaching and learning is changing in a world in which the tools youth have access to include traditional print and technology-based resources.

**Meeting of the Minds: Youth, Social Media, and Education**

[www.nypl.org/audiovideo/meeting-minds-youth-social-media-and-education](http://www.nypl.org/audiovideo/meeting-minds-youth-social-media-and-education)

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