

Research Agendas and Time

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ALISE, January 25, 2013

Large Scale Efforts

1973

- Harold Borko, *Targets for Research in Library Education*

1982

- Cuadra Associates Inc., *A Library and Information Science Research Agenda for the 1980s*

1988

- Office of Library Programs, U.S. Dept. of Education, *Rethinking the Library in the Information Age*

2000

- John V. Richardson, "Millennium Project Research Agenda"

More Specialized Efforts

YALSA Research Agenda (1994)

Kusack, “A Research Agenda for College Libraries” (1997)

LISR, “Research Agenda Beyond 2000” (1997)”

SLA Research Agenda 2000

ACRL Research Agenda for Library Instruction and
Information Literacy (2003)

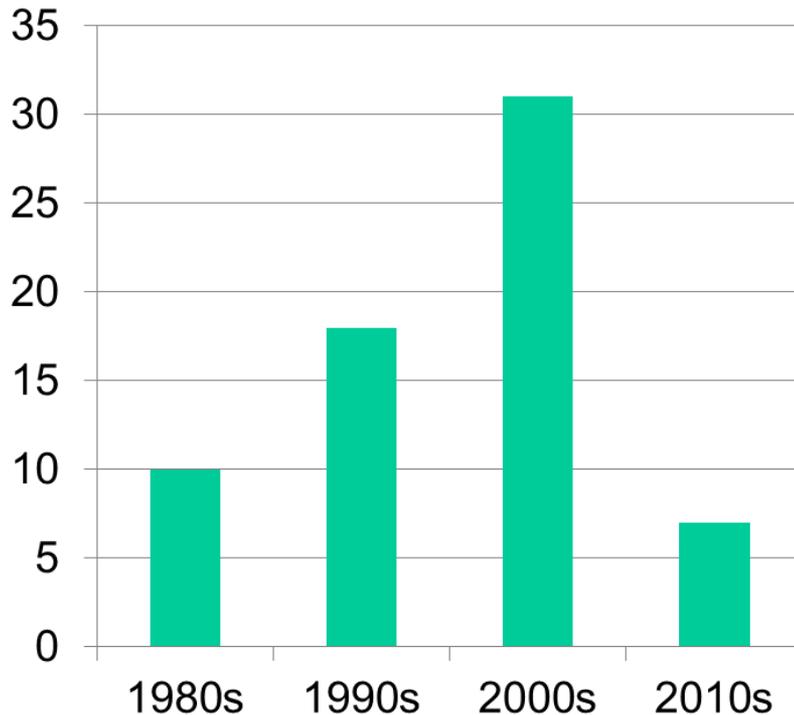
Digital Reference Research Agenda (2004)

Medical Library Association Research Agenda (2009)

YALSA Research Agenda (2010)

LIS Journal Literature: Trends over Time

Articles & Chapters

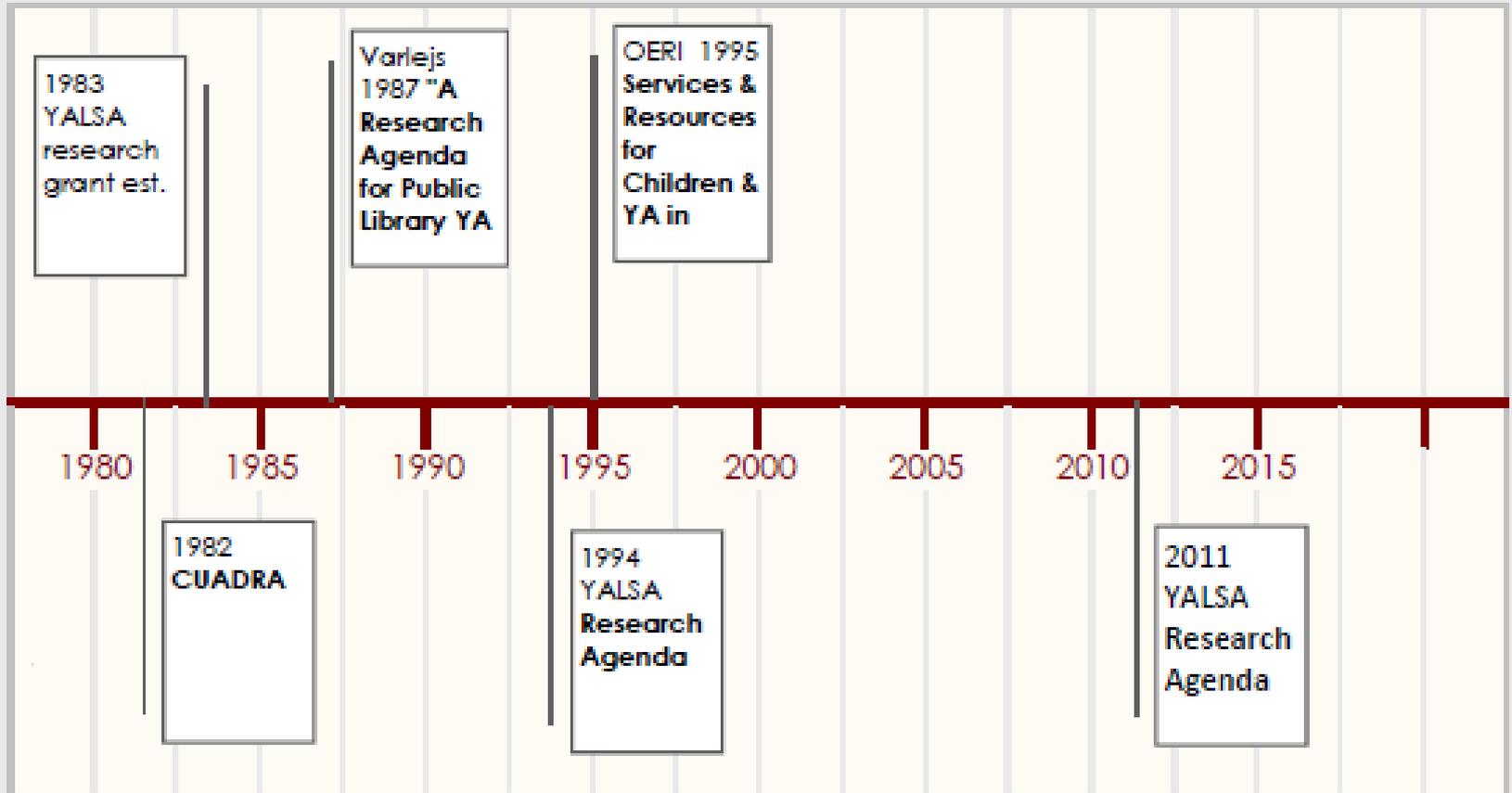


Standard Sources

- ✓ Against the Grain (2)
- ✓ American Archivist (4)
- ✓ College & Research Libraries (3)
- ✓ C&RL News (3)
- ✓ Info Outlook (2*)
- ✓ J of Academic Librarianship (3)
- ✓ JELIS (2)
- ✓ J of Info Science (2)
- ✓ JASIST (3)
- ✓ J of the Medical Lib Assoc (3)
- ✓ J of Youth Services in Libs (4*)
- ✓ LISR (5)
- ✓ LQ (5)



YALSA Research Agenda



1994

- Access
- Demographics
- Evaluation
- Information Seeking
- Inter-Disciplinary
- Technology
- History

2011

- Impact of Libraries on Young Adults
- Young Adult Reading and Resources
- Information-Seeking Behaviors and Needs of Young Adults
- Informal and Formal Learning Environments and Young Adults

An Early Information -Centric Agenda

Machlup, Fritz and Mansfield, Una. *The Study of Information*.
New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1983.

Disciplines: orderly arrangements of things deemed to be
worthy of being known

Communication: need for people who are “multilingual” in
cross-disciplinary vocabularies

Purpose: logical and pragmatic relations among the disciplines
described

Should Agendas be Multi-Disciplinary?

This is an open question, subject to speculation.

One way to respond is:

What is the question asked?

The ultimate answer, we submit, is a choice between “good” and “better”

What Constitutes a Research Agenda?

Office of Library Services, US Department of Education:

Four meetings in 1986–87 resulted in “Issues in Library Research: Proposals for the 1990s”
Published as *Rethinking the Library in the information age*, vols. 1–3.

Some Issues Identified

- **Policy issues**
- **Access to information**
- **Organizing, indexing, and retrieving information**
- **Role of the public services librarian**
- **Library funding and economics**
- **Information users and needs**

Questions Asked

- **“Are the structure, organization and delivery of information influenced or decided more by aggregates of users (e.g., professional firms, businesses, citizen organizations) than by individuals as users (e.g., parent, student, private citizens)?”**
- **“Can a cost benefit/effectiveness library model be constructed?”**
- **“How can we measure the cost to society and to the individual of illiteracy and of the inability to use information successfully?”**
- **“Should librarians try to ‘add value’ to the information they give?”**

Policy Issues

Major issues identified:

- ❖ **Institutional adaptation**
- ❖ **Professional adaptation**
- ❖ **The library as social agent**

The essay in *Rethinking the Library* emphasizes technological change as a primary shapers of policy.

Does that still hold today as a research imperative?

Robert Hayes: LIS Programs not Central to Universities

More than thirty years ago educational programs were seen as peripheral to their parent institutions.

Is there still an intellectual/scholarly distance?

Where does “information” reside?

What is the critical mass of faculty, students, and budget required to succeed?

Beverly Lynch: Education and Praxis

Praxis is based on consensual principles of action and decision making.

Education includes abstraction and generality that may have less direct or immediate applicability.

Research is needed in LIS programs, but should be directed towards the needs of praxis.

Have her concerns been addressed?

Research and Information Access

- **Greater precision in organization is needed**
- **Artificial intelligence should be used to develop expert systems**
- **Research in systems design should focus on individual searchers, rather than on classes of searchers**
- **The political economy of moving the library community from consumers to producers of information**

Research and the public Services Librarian

- **New technologies require new skills; research into defining those skills is needed**
- **Librarians should be well positioned to communicate with systems designers to create effective database construction**
- **Professionals need a theoretical grounding in social and cognitive sciences to offer the depth and complexity of services required**

Funding and Economics

Library evaluations, measurements, etc.

Library budget

Library services and collections

University ratings, community perceptions, etc.

Later Agendas

Wayne Wiegand's Critiques

Librarianship has been too insular and hasn't learned what other fields can teach us.

Technology may be employed for its own sake and uncritically.

Research into the phenomena related to reading has been underdeveloped in the profession.

Social, economic, cultural, ethnic, and other blind spots have typified inquiry.

More from Wiegand

Libraries as community institutions have been understudied.

Pay attention to the user in the life of the library and the library in the life of the user.

Possible questions to be asked:

- **The library as a place for the exchange of social capital**
- **The library as a locus for the learning of civic lessons.**
- **What symbolic values do people attach to the library as place?**

Particular Agendas

Veinot and Williams on Everyday Life Information Behavior (borrowing from sociology)

- ✓ **Functionalism**
- ✓ **Evolution**
- ✓ **Conflict**
- ✓ **Interactionism**
- ✓ **Exchange**

Research on eParticipation

Potential for inquiry into policy issues, including the civic position of libraries

Examining participation in community decision making

Identifying the actors in governance and citizen participation

Investigation into the extent to which technology assists extended community participation

Research on Emotional Labor

Matteson and Miller

- ❑ **Studying the suppression or expression of professionals' emotions**
- ❑ **Inquiry into display rules (or expected emotional responses)**
- ❑ **Examination of how display rules may change in different circumstances**
- ❑ **investigation of how professionals carry out emotional regulation strategies**

What Is Required for an Agenda Today?

**A Commitment to Research as Pathways to
Understanding (prerequisite to the conduct of
research)**

**Many questions are underdetermined (they lack
support for the expression of the query)**

**A palliative for underdetermination is complex
development of theories**

**Much greater sophistication with quantitative and
qualitative methods**



Questions and Topics

Should *Rethinking the Library* be revisited?

Are those issues still pertinent today?

Is there a “post-traditional” period that calls for its own set of questions?

Has technology become a separate defining research imperative?

Revisiting Machlup and Mansfield (1983): Topics

- Cognitive science
- Informatics
- Artificial intelligence
- Linguistics
- LIS
- Cybernetics
- Information theory
- Systems theory
- Social sciences

Imposed Research Agendas

The edicts of “The Man” (the federal government’s priorities)

Foundations and “Doing Good”

Campus policies and preferences (including local funding)

Status of programs (“I,” “L,” and “LIS”)



Where Do We Go Now” — Axl Rose



You call this an agenda?