JOIN US as we explore how libraries can effectively help teens navigate a challenging world.

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### YALS ON THE WEB

- Want more YALS? Members and subscribers can access the latest and back issues of YALS digitally on the YALSA blog at http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/yals/, as well as browse supplemental YALS articles and resources.
This issue of YALS explores how library staff can support equity, diversity, and inclusion through outcomes and assessment. It specifically focuses on strategies you can use to support equity, diversity, and inclusion in your programs, and ways you can make sure you are reaching your goals. The Features section starts out with a powerful article by Dr. Nicole A. Cooke that drives home why diverse books are important in all communities. The second article is by Dr. Peter Wardrip, Dr. Sam Abramovich, Rebecca Millerjohn, and Jordan M. Smith. This article demonstrates how to foster equity and inclusion in library maker spaces, and offers support for understanding how to assess those programs to further equity and inclusion. The final article is by Sari Widman, Josephina Chang-Order, Dr. William B. Penuel, and Amanda Wortman. They present evaluation tools that can be implemented to support equitable youth engagement in libraries.

The Trending Section includes an article from Dr. Caro Williams-Pierce that describes how you can use games to help develop equity in math learning. In the Explore Section, Julie Winkelstein presents a Research Roundup, which features research articles related to supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion through outcomes and assessment. The Highlights section features YALSA-related articles, features an article about how to get engaged with YALSA, YALSA’s statement on continuous learning, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion plan that was published late last summer, and the Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff.

Don’t forget that the YALSAblog includes additional materials that complement the print YALS. You’ll find that content at: http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/category/yals
In this, my last column as President of YALSA, I am going to highlight some of the work that YALSA has already done and is doing that relates to this theme of Supporting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion through Outcomes and Assessment, which is both the theme of this issue and of my presidential year. Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is a priority for YALSA. YALSA has been working to create more opportunities for member engagement and develop an inclusive environment for all our members. At ALA Annual Meeting 2018 in New Orleans, the board passed two documents, #23 Creating a More Inclusive Environment and #29 Improving the Member Engagement Experience. These documents encompassed a host of suggestions that YALSA immediately began to update. These included:

- Expand the Chair Manual to include content about what we mean by ethical behavior; building cultural competency; creating a welcoming, inclusive environment; how to report concerns or problems; etc. An updated manual was adopted by the board of directors on June 23, 2018.

- Ensure that the Committee FAQ and list of responsibilities for committee members has information about how to report concerns/problems. This was completed in April 2018.

- Prior to conferences, send YALSA attendees a reminder about ALA’s Statement of Appropriate Conduct. Implementation began in June 2018 with an e-blast to YALSA attendees.

- Create and distribute an exit survey for outgoing committee members and chairs to gauge their experience and identify areas for improvement. The survey has been created and is being implemented with committees ending after Annual 2019.

- Revisit appointment instructions that are sent to the president-elect to emphasize the need for due diligence in thoroughly vetting potential chairs and committee members. This was completed in April 2018.

- Update and expand YALSA’s Ethical Behavior Policy for Volunteers. An updated version was adopted by the board of directors on June 23, 2018.

(continued on page 12)
Getting Involved with YALSA!

What is Your Pathway to Participation?

Whether you are a new member or have been a member for years and are thinking about how to best be involved with YALSA, there are options for everyone. YALSA offers a variety of paths to involvement. Getting involved in YALSA doesn’t take knowing a secret handshake or a complex process. All you have to do is apply! I applied for the member manager of the YALSAblog position and got it and that kicked off my long-term involvement with YALSA. After holding this position for a couple of years, I was asked to run for the board of directors. I was not elected the first time, but ended up being asked by the board to fill a one-year term that came open when a board member had to resign early. As I was filling that one-year position, I was asked to run for secretary and was elected. During my first year as secretary, I transitioned from being the member manager of the YALSAblog to being the editor for YALS. I ran for president-elect during my first year as secretary, which is the position I now serve in. For many others their path to YALSA leadership starts with committee service.

Now YALSA offers even more ways than ever before to get involved. Committee, jury, advisory board, and taskforce commitments are for three months, six months, and twelve months, depending on the group. There are blogging opportunities on the YALSAblog and The Hub. Or if you are interested in writing longer pieces, contact the editor of YALS and talk about submitting an article. Even if you are new to your position or YALSA, this is a great opportunity to share your learning experiences and expertise with others. The Selected Lists have now transitioned to The Hub and you can apply to

Now YALSA offers even more ways than ever before to get involved. Committee, jury, advisory board, and taskforce commitments are for three months, six months, and twelve months, depending on the group.
work on a Selected List Blogging Team (applications are accepted July–September each year). The transition of the lists from committees to the blog means that there is more opportunity to participate because you are not required to go to the conferences.

There are also a variety of leadership positions available. You can apply to be the member manager for the two blogs, YALSAblog and The Hub, and the Program HQ when they are available. You can volunteer to chair a committee, jury, advisory board, or taskforce. Or if you are interested in governance, talk to members of the board development committee about running for a spot on the board. Want to know what the board does but aren’t sure that you are ready to commit to a three-year term? Apply for the board fellow position! It is a one-year commitment that helps you understand what the board does.

If you have a great idea and know like-minded members who are interested in the same thing, create an interest group (http://www.ala.org/yalsa/aboutalsa/yalsehandbook/convenor). Current interest groups range from those based on location, teen mental health, teen services coordinators, and teens are not alone. These are opt-in, informal groups you can create or join to talk with others who have similar interests or live in similar areas.

If your schedule doesn’t allow for participation in on-going activities, YALSA has a variety of one-time opportunities, including:

- Hosting a local meet-up
- Staffing an exhibit booth at a state or national conference
- Presenting a program at the symposium or ALA’s Annual Conference
- Presenting a webinar
- Updating or creating a YALSA wiki page
- And more

For more information about how to get involved in YALSA, go to the Get Involved with YALSA web page (http://www.ala.org/yalsa/get-involved/getinvolved). Also, volunteer opportunities are shared via the weekly YALSA eNews, so make sure you’re receiving and reading that regularly. If you have any questions about getting involved, or want to learn more, please contact Letitia Smith at lsmith@ala.org or 312.280.4390 and she’ll be happy to help.
Editor’s Note: On May 25, 2018, YALSA’s board of directors adopted a new statement on the value of continuous learning for all library staff. Read it below and share it with your colleagues and supervisors.

All library staff, regardless of library size or type, have both the right and the responsibility to be engaged in effective continuing education (CE) and professional development (PD) throughout their careers (http://www.ala.org/yalsa/yalsa-statement-importance-continuous-learning-all-library-staff). Keeping up to date with new knowledge and practices in adolescent development, librarianship, and related fields, as well as being engaged in creating or contributing to new knowledge or best practices, are essential for all library staff to be able to serve all teens in their community successfully.

All library staff must commit to continuous learning because of the ever-changing nature of teens and the materials and technologies we use to engage with and serve them. Our communities are changing and evolving as well, so keeping up to date on information and skills is essential if libraries are to remain relevant in the 21st century.

In return for committing to continuous learning, participating in high-quality CE helps library staff:

- Expand and enhance their job qualifications
- Increase their employability and/or income
- Gain confidence
- Grow a network of peers
- Contribute to improving the profession

In addition to continuous learning for teen-focused staff, YALSA firmly believes it is imperative that all library staff from all types of libraries, not just those with teen services in their job titles and job descriptions, must have the skills required to work successfully with and for teens. As teens make use of all areas of libraries—from circulation to reference and from readers’ advisory to computer labs and makerspaces—all staff take part in critical interactions with the age group. Therefore, to effectively support teens, all library staff must take advantage of CE/PD that enable them to gain confidence and competence in serving teens, especially those outlined in Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff.

The continuous learning of library staff is a responsibility shared among library staff, library administrators, CE/PD providers, graduate programs at iSchools and library and information science (LIS) programs, professional associations, and other stakeholders. Library staff need support from key stakeholders to be successful in their professional development endeavors. Recommendations for how stakeholders, such as library administrators, can support continuous learning for library staff are detailed in Transforming Teen Services Through Continuing Education: Recommendations and Findings.
As a Part of a Commitment to Continuous Learning, All Library Staff Must:

- Read and embrace national guidelines and standards for serving teens through libraries and continuous learning, such as Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff.

- Embrace a culture of learning
  - Use tools such as Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff to assess continuous learning needs and prioritize areas for growth, resisting the temptation to take CE/PD in areas of comfort and confidence, and instead focus on topics that are less familiar and comfortable.
  - Be open and willing to try new things, take risks, and explore areas that might cause discomfort.
  - Accept a role as a co-learner, who builds knowledge and skills alongside teens.
  - Seek mentors and peers, both inside and outside the library, whose work with teens can help inform and advance personal practice.
  - Join and participate in relevant personal learning networks and respected communities of practice and professional associations.
  - Recognize that since everyone in the library is responsible for working for and with teens, all library staff need teen-focused CE/PD.
  - Share knowledge and skills with peers and colleagues and support their learning.
  - Take time to celebrate CE/PD achievements and include them on resumes, in portfolios, etc.

- Proactively seek out and participate in high-quality CE, which is learning that helps library staff:
  - Develop skills and understanding
  - Practice what's learned in a real-life setting
  - Receive feedback on that practice
  - Engage with other learners from within and beyond the library field
  - Reflect and analyze what's been learned
  - Move on to a next level in the learning

- Advocate for access to high-quality CE opportunities
  - Advocate to supervisors and managers about teen-focused CE/PD needs, using this report and YALSA’s Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff to help make the case.
  - Research the CE/PD offerings from library-focused institutions and organizations as well as youth-serving organizations, and advocate to supervisors and managers about the value of participating.
  - Work with supervisors and peers to forge collaborative opportunities between and among all library types to build continuous learning opportunities across institutions, and work together to support teen-focused knowledge and skills.
  - Encourage state library agencies, graduate programs at iSchools and LIS programs, and other library-focused organizations to expand CE/PD opportunities that support the learning needs that academic, school, and public library staff have in common.

- Set a strategy and vision for continuous learning that advances a 21st century vision of serving teens through libraries as outlined in key documents, such as YALSA’s The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action
  - Promote, create, and distribute foundational documents such as Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff.
  - Update existing or create new position statements, guidelines, standards, etc. as needed that emphasize the importance for library staff to commit to learning throughout their career as well as the importance of creating a culture of learning within libraries.

- Identify and use effective CE/PD models and share emerging and best practices, especially those outlined in YALSA’s report, Transforming Teen Services Through Continuing Education: Recommendations and Findings

- Build the capacity of YALSA and the library community to provide CE/PD
  - Partner with organizations and agencies outside of libraries to guarantee inclusion of CE/PD perspectives that support teens with diverse needs and from diverse backgrounds.

As Part of a Commitment to Its Members and to CE, YALSA Will:

- Commit substantial resources to support members’ continuous learning efforts by
  - Creating affordable, accessible, dynamic, and relevant CE/PD opportunities.
  - Adopting new modes of delivery as they emerge.
  - Supporting members in identifying and participating in relevant high-quality CE/PD.
  - Playing a role in facilitating self-directed learning among its members.
  - Developing assessment tools to assist members in evaluating their skills and knowledge and identifying areas to focus on for CE/PD.
° With stakeholders, develop a method for identifying qualified CE/PD trainers, who can provide a range of voices and perspectives on high-quality library teen services, and disseminating that information out to the library community.
° Seek out short-term and long-term funding to help design, development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative CE/PD.
° Conduct and use programmatic evaluation information to improve outcomes and refine CE/PD models.

• Promote a culture of learning
  ° Work with partners to develop and disseminate resources that support libraries in creating a culture of learning among their institution’s staff.

• Advocate for the importance of continuous learning
  ° Support national advocacy efforts that call attention to the importance of CE/PD and continuous learning for all library staff.
  ° Advocate nationwide for the importance of teen focused CE/PD for all library staff, regardless of job title or job description.
  ° Promote existing and create new methods for honoring high-quality training and innovative CE/PD models.

° Gather data for informed planning and decision-making
  ° Continues to learn about the current needs of teens and library staff training.
  ° Regularly assess the value and content of the teen-focused training provided to library staff.

Selected Resources

The following documents were consulted when developing this one:
° American Mathematics Association of Two-Year Colleges Position Statement: Support for Professional Development
° Association of College and Research Libraries Statement on Professional Development
° International Association for Physical Education in Higher Education Position Statement on PE-CPD
° National Science Teachers of America Position Statement: Professional Development in Science Education
Editor’s Note: On October 31, 2018, YALSA’s board of directors adopted an *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan*. Read it below and share it with your colleagues and supervisors. An update on the progress made toward the goals of this plan was presented at ALA Annual 2019 and can be found in Board Document 31.

Foreword
The purpose of this plan is to affirm YALSA’s commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and to highlight the equity, diversity, and inclusion–related strategies that the YALSA board is taking in the organization’s Strategic and Implementation Plans. Given the predominant whiteness and femaleness of the profession and the diversity of the populations served by the profession, it is crucial that equity, diversity, and inclusion are at the forefront of our members’ minds and that we as an organization are working to make YALSA a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. The document provides YALSA’s Mission; Vision; Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Vision for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; and Strategies for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for 2018–2020. The strategies section lists five goals with their supporting strategies. Each strategy is embedded in the Strategic and Implementation Plan and will be evaluated as it is completed. It is a living document that the YALSA board will revisit and revise as necessary and during future strategic planning processes.

Acknowledgments
We wish to thank the Advancing Diversity Task Force for laying the groundwork for this plan. The task force members included Nicole A. Cooke (chair), Amanda Barnhart, Shante Burns–Simpson, Veronica Rey, Alice Son, Valerie Tagoe, and Julie Winkelstein.

YALSA Mission
Our mission is to support library staff in alleviating the challenges teens face, and in putting all teens—especially those with the greatest needs—on the path to successful and fulfilling lives.

YALSA Vision
Our vision is that all teens, from a variety of backgrounds, including but not limited to, ability, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion, and power–differentiated groups, will have access to quality library programs and services—no matter where they occur—that are tailored to the community and that create new opportunities for all teens to promote personal growth, academic success, and career development, while linking teens and staff to resources, connected learning opportunities, coaching, and mentoring.
YALSA Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are ideals that the Young Adult Library Services Association seeks to affirm in all facets of the organization. As a professional organization dedicated to enhancing library services for and with teens, YALSA recognizes that all teens, and particularly teens from underserved and marginalized communities, need and deserve to see themselves reflected in the library staffing, policies, signage, website content, and much more. Therefore, YALSA seeks to address the cultural mismatch between today’s increasingly diverse teen population and the librarian workforce, which remains overwhelmingly white and female.

Although achieving greater representational diversity is an important component of YALSA’s EDI goals, there are two equally important issues that YALSA is committed to redressing on an institutional level: equity and inclusion. Attending to issues of equity and inclusion are important because they help move the organization away from mere platitudes about diversity and demand measurable actions to redress the systemic power asymmetries that have kept certain groups of people on the periphery of the organization. When YALSA attends to inequities in the organization, there is a direct benefit to all of the nation’s teens who are more apt to feel included and empowered in library and information spaces, both physically and virtually. Moreover, an explicit EDI statement can help undergird cultural competence training and professional development for the library staff charged with serving the diverse needs of all teens.

Further, YALSA affirms and supports the American Library Association’s (ALA’s) EDI-related policies, as outlined in the ALA Policy Manual, sections B3-B8.

—Adopted by YALSA’s board of directors, October 17, 2018

YALSA Vision for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The vision for YALSA is to be a diverse, inclusive, and equitable organization that flourishes on the exchange of ideas from different perspectives. We believe the diversity of viewpoints that comes from different life experiences, identities, cultural backgrounds, and more enables YALSA to better achieve its mission to support library staff in alleviating the challenges teens face, and in putting all teens—especially those with the greatest needs—on the path to successful and fulfilling lives.

We Are Committed To:

• Increasing diversity, which is expressed in myriad forms, including but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, age, disability status, ideology, religion, power-differentiated groups, and professional skill and experience levels, across the organization, including among our members, leadership, staff, and partners.
• Working actively to redress institutional inequities and systemic power asymmetries that affect our society, to challenge bias, harassment, and discrimination, and to provide equal opportunity for all persons.
• Deliberately pursuing efforts to ensure that YALSA is an inclusive place where differences are welcomed, where different perspectives are respectfully heard and responded to, and where every individual feels a sense of belonging and inclusion.

Goal 1: Create an Inclusive, Equitable, and Welcoming Organizational Environment

Strategies

• Expand current YALSA board member leadership training to include high-quality education and experiences in diversity, equity, and inclusion.
• Provide professional development experiences for YALSA staff focused on related topics such as cultural competency and handling diversity, equity, and inclusion issues.
• Provide training for committee, task force, and jury chairs related to diversity, equity, and inclusion both as part of their onboarding process and as continued leadership support.
• Leadership and staff will apply what they learn from EDI-related training and implement it in member engagement, recruitment, and retention.
• Provide feedback mechanisms for participants in webinars, listserv discussions, committee meetings, and more.

1. Audit existing YALSA activities to create a more inclusive, equitable, and welcoming organizational environment.
2. Recruit, retain, and develop a more diverse membership and cadre of volunteers at all levels in the organization.
3. Continue to align our policies, procedures, and practices with our EDI vision.
4. Ensure that YALSA members know how to develop inclusive and equitable library spaces, services, and programs.
5. Create and maintain formal and informal partnerships with other organizations around a shared commitment to redressing institutional inequalities and systemic power asymmetries.

Goals and Strategies for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion 2018–2020

Over the next two years, YALSA seeks the following goals to move toward our Vision for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:
and conference programs to ensure they are inclusive, and respond to incidents of bias, harassment, discrimination, and intolerance if necessary.

- Offer ongoing opportunities for YALSA members, leaders, and staff to discuss EDI and what it means.
- Conduct yearly surveys and periodic focus groups with YALSA members and potential members to help the association understand EDI perspectives related to YALSA’s organizational environment.
- Offer conference buddies for first-time attendees.
- Ensure events and experiences at conferences, including networking opportunities, are inclusive.
- Continue to encourage diverse participation in activities such as the weekly Member Spotlight in the eNews.
- Provide regular communication to members as laid out in the Communication Plan.

Goal 2: Recruit, Retain, and Develop a More Diverse Membership

Strategies
- Develop a recruitment campaign targeted at library staff from underrepresented groups.
- Encourage ALA to investigate alternative dues structures.
- Assess existing pathways to professional success and involvement within YALSA for underrepresented groups.
- Provide support for members from underrepresented groups, such as a mentoring program, networking opportunities at conferences or in ALA Connect, grants to attend YALSA’s symposium or other events, and other opportunities.
- Continue to reach out to and engage with individuals representing underrepresented groups to serve on the YALSA board, committees, task forces, and juries, and to present at conferences.
- Continue to provide guidance for committee appointments and volunteer opportunities to include and increase diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Continue to expand member involvement in YALSA committees, task forces, and other volunteer activities that do not require conference attendance.
- Promptly respond to volunteers who fill out the volunteer form.
- Implement a member referral program aimed at individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Partner with other organizations to recruit diverse members.
- Ensure recruitment materials prominently feature YALSA’s commitment to EDI.

Goal 3: Align Our Policies and Practices with Our EDI Vision

Strategies
- Institute a practice to ask ourselves these questions: How does this policy, practice, or partnership support YALSA’s equity, diversity, and inclusion vision? Does it support equitable and inclusive access and opportunity? Is it neutral? Does it stand in the way of our vision?
- Audit existing policies, procedures, and practices to align them with YALSA’s EDI vision.
- Use an equity lens to create messaging, resources, services, and programs.
- Require that all proposals that come to the board include a section on attention to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Hold ourselves accountable through annual internal review of all strategies in this plan, our values, and YALSA policies and adjust as needed.

Goal 4. Ensure that YALSA Members Know How to Develop Inclusive and Equitable Library Services and Programs

Strategies
- Continue to provide professional development experiences for YALSA members of all job types, including support staff, focused on cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Embed cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion in all YALSA professional learning opportunities no matter the topic focus.
- Create a clearinghouse or speakers’ bureau of people with expertise in equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Provide models of inclusive and equitable library services and programs.
- Create and distribute materials, such as toolkits, to help members better serve diverse youth and to address issues of institutional bias and racism in their library.

Goal 5. Create Formal and Informal Partnerships with Other Organizations Around a Shared Commitment to Redressing Institutional Inequities and Systemic Power Asymmetries

Strategies
- Work with library and information science (LIS) and iSchools to ensure that cultural competencies, equity, diversity, and inclusion are included in all youth-oriented curricula.
- Identify potential partners whose mission is in alignment with YALSA’s EDI vision and build opportunities to move our work forward through the partnership.
• Identify potential funding agencies who make diversity, equity, and inclusion central to their missions and philanthropic efforts.

Implementation
The strategies listed in this plan have been and will be embedded in YALSA’s current and future Strategic Organizational and Implementation Plans.

Evaluation
Each of the strategies will be evaluated separately as part of its individual implementation. The YALSA president will present a progress report at the 2019 ALA Annual Conference at the end of year one of this plan. For the ALA Annual Conference in 2020, a two-year annual report will be presented to give an update on the status of this plan, as well as an updated plan for the following two years.

Additional Information/Resources Consulted
• ALA Policy Manual, www.ala.org/aboutala/b3-diversity-old-number-60
• Examples of EDI plans from other organizations:
  ◦ https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/content/edf_2014_diversity_strategy_full_report_0.pdf
• Develop language for use with all advisory board/committee/jury/taskforce policies and procedures to address the issue of inappropriate remarks during committee meetings. “Frame all discussions in an inclusive manner, and instruct group members to refrain from advancing personal beliefs, and using any discriminatory, racist, homophobic, sexist or similarly insensitive language.” Adopted by the board of directors on June 23, 2018.
• Flesh out a process for reporting and acting on member concerns and develop the guidelines to enforce outcomes. Organization and Bylaws has created a process and a reporting form to be posted on YALSA’s website.
• Putting processes in place so there isn’t the “brain drain” each year when the appointments process is handed over from one president to the next; assign past-president, president, and president-elect to create a manual.

FROM THE EDITOR (continued from page 2)

• Putting processes in place with the president-elect, who makes the appointments, and the membership manager, who helps the president-elect, to ensure that everyone who fills out a volunteer form receives at least a confirmation message and a follow-up message; assign to Division and Membership Promotion.

The Advancing Diversity Taskforce, led by Dr. Nicole A. Cooke, finished their work in February 2018, which culminated in a report. The report provided YALSA a set of recommendations, which were prioritized by the board at Annual 2018. One recommendation from the report was to create an Equity Diversity, and Inclusion Plan, which YALSA did. The plan was adopted by the board on October 31, 2018. Since the adoption of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan, progress has been made on about half of the strategies laid out under the five goals. The progress is laid out in Board Document #31, presented at Annual 2019, and includes: creating a manual for the president-elect to support EDI goals in appointments, including demographic information in the volunteer form, and making the annual survey open to members and nonmembers. Along with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan, YALSA evaluated and revised its Mission, Vision, and Intended Impact Statements, and adopted an EDI statement. To meet YALSA’s commitment to EDI requires all those involved with YALSA to continually learn and grow; this is supported by YALSA’s Statement on the Importance of Continuous Learning for all Library Staff. YALSA has also released a new set of competencies called Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff, which promote cultural competency and responsiveness as a major component of quality service to teens. All of these resources support equity, diversity, and inclusion for teens and for the services designed for teens. Enjoy this issue that helps expand your knowledge about supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion through outcomes and assessment.
Editor’s Note: On October 30, 2017, YALSA’s board of directors adopted Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff. Following is an excerpt of the complete competencies, which can be found through the link. Read them below and share them with your colleagues and supervisors. For a one-page snapshot click here.

Disposition
Professional dispositions are the ongoing beliefs, values, and commitments that affect library staff’s work for/with teens, their families and the community, and that impact their own professional growth. Dispositions cut across all the core content areas and the competencies, which follow later in this document.

A person well-suited to working with and for teens through libraries:
• Maintains an open and ongoing curiosity about the fields of teen development and learning
• Shows warmth, caring, and respect for all teens and their families
• Recognizes and respects the diversity of teens and their families, and understands this diversity impacts all areas of practice
• Recognizes the systemic inequities that exist in our institutions and communities and strives to dismantle them and to provide equitable access for and with all youth
• Takes an asset-based approach to working for and with teens and their families
• Values creativity and imagination in learning, and promotes those attributes in teens and in themselves
• Demonstrates responsible professional and personal habits in interacting and working with others, and models and practices a positive attitude
• Responds to challenges and changes with flexibility, perseverance, and cooperation
• Communicates respectfully, clearly, and effectively with all teens and adults
• Recognizes that quality library services support teens and families, and bridge the gap between school and home
• Values the importance of collaboration and engagement with youth development stakeholders, community members and organizations, and local decision-makers
• Values ongoing professional development and continually seeks to increase their own knowledge and skills to support teen development and learning
• Upholds the right of all, including teens, to free expression and free access to a depth and breadth of ideas and information

Content Areas
1. Teen Growth and Development: Knows the typical benchmarks for growth and development and uses this knowledge to plan,
provide, and evaluate library resources, programs, and services that meet the multiple needs of teens.

2. **Interactions with Teens:** Recognizes the importance of relationships and communication in the development and implementation of quality teen library services, and implements techniques and strategies to support teens individually and in group experiences to develop self-concept, identity, coping mechanisms, and positive interactions with peers and adults.

3. **Learning Environments (formal & informal):** Cultivates high-quality, developmentally appropriate, flexible learning environments that support teens individually and in group experiences as they engage in formal and informal learning activities.

4. **Learning Experiences (formal & informal):** Works with teens, volunteers, community partners and others to plan, implement and evaluate high-quality, developmentally appropriate formal and informal learning activities that support teens’ personal and academic interests.

5. **Youth Engagement and Leadership:** Responds to all teens’ interests and needs, and acts in partnership with teens to create and implement teen activities and to foster teen leadership.

6. **Community and Family Engagement:** Builds respectful, reciprocal relationships with community organizations and families to promote optimal development for teens and to enhance the quality of library services.

7. **Cultural Competency and Responsiveness:** Actively promotes respect for cultural diversity and creates an inclusive, welcoming, and respectful library atmosphere that embraces diversity.

8. **Equity of Access:** Ensures access to a wide variety of library resources, services, and activities for and with all teens, especially those facing challenges to access.

9. **Outcomes and Assessment:** Focuses on the impact of library programs for and with teens and uses data to inform service development, implementation, and continuous improvement.

10. **Continuous Learning:** Acts ethically, is committed to continuous learning, and advocates for best library practices and policies for teen services.

### Competencies

**Content Area 1: Teen Growth and Development**

- Knows the typical benchmarks for growth and development and uses this knowledge to provide library resources, programs, and services that meet the multiple needs of teens.

Library staff understand teen growth and development, respond to the needs of teens, and develop relationships, programs, and services that support them in successfully preparing for adulthood. Taking into consideration cultural differences and special needs, library staff the opportunity to create experiences that reflect the developmental needs of the teens in their specific community.

**Developing**
- Is aware of basic benchmarks related to teens’ physical, cognitive, language, and communication, social and emotional, and creative development, and can describe developmentally appropriate library services and practices.
- Accepts individual differences in teen development and values different attributes such as personalities, temperaments, and cultural influences.
- Is aware of current teen cultures, including use of digital tools, language, and popular media.
- Appreciates that all teens need to develop a sense of self, including a positive identity.
- Understands the role of libraries in helping all teens succeed in school and prepare for college, careers, and life.

**Practicing**
- Engages teens in college- and career-readiness activities that build on their strengths and meet their individual needs, interests, learning styles, and abilities.
- Uses tools and resources in library programming and services that are pertinent to teen needs, interests, culture, learning styles, and abilities.
- Acknowledges and responds to individual differences in personalities, temperaments, culture, learning styles, and abilities.
- Applies information on teen growth and development, culture, and learning styles to all areas of library practice, including collection development, reference and user services, outreach, and programming.
- Promotes growth and development using appropriate and targeted library activities and resources that support individual teen development, including developing a positive sense of self.

**Transforming**
- Connects current theories, research, and best practices relating to teen growth and development to the development of library collections, programs, and services.
- Advocates for library policies that support teen developmental needs and growth.
- Connects with library staff and community partners to advance...
teen growth and development so that all teens are prepared for college, careers, and life
• Teaches others, including library staff and volunteers, about teen growth and development and how it informs the creation of library services for and with teens

Content Area 2: Interactions with Teens
Recognizes the importance of relationships and communication in the development and implementation of quality teen library services, and implements techniques and strategies to support teens individually and in group experiences to develop self-concept, identity, coping mechanisms, and positive interactions with their peers and adults.

All activities that library staff engage in, from homework help, to teen internship training, to community engagement, provide opportunities to build relationships with teens. These relationships have a powerful impact on teens and communities. It is through them that teens gain social skills and confidence, learn from adult role models, and gain agency. These interactions result in library staff building ties to the teen community that result in high-quality responsive and flexible services for the age group.

Developing
• Listens to and respects all teens’ interests, opinions, and cultures in the development of library collections, programs, and services
• Maintains a library environment in which teen confidentiality and privacy is respected
• Communicates and describes the importance of positive interactions with teens to the development of quality library collections, programs, and services

Practicing
• Understands effective group and individual management strategies that are based on theories, research, and best practices for teen development
• Understands that interacting with teens requires going outside of the library and into the community
• Is aware of the community’s teen demographics

Content Area 3: Learning Environments (formal & informal)
Cultivates high-quality, developmentally appropriate, flexible learning environments that support teens individually and in group experiences as they engage in formal and informal learning activities.

Library staff actively create learning environments that are welcoming and responsive to teen needs. It is through these environments that teens can develop social competence and gain a sense of belonging. Successful learning environments developed for and with teens provide opportunities to interact with library materials and resources, engage in informal and formal learning activities, and collaborate with peers, experts, and role models. Library staff know that to create these environments successfully, teen input, equitable access, and encouragement of teens to use the space in ways that meet their particular needs are required.

Developing
• Understands the importance of maintaining developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive
environments in the library that support formal and informal learning activities
• Understands the need to engage in ongoing design and assessment of library learning environments
• Identifies aspects of developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive environments and that are inclusive of youth choice
• Provides resources and materials (physical and digital) that can be used in a variety of ways to encourage imagination and creativity, and to foster learning environments where teens develop creative skills and multiple literacies
• Acknowledges challenges to teen equity and inclusion that occur in the design and management of the overall library program

Practicing
• Provides space (physical and virtual, in the library and in the community) that is engaging for all teens and encourages them to join in individual, group, and collaborative activities to learn formally and informally
• Creates library environments that value, affirm, and respect diverse interests, needs, cultures, learning styles, and abilities
• Removes barriers of access to library learning environments
• Encourages teens’ communication and interpersonal skills in a safe and inclusive environment
• Promotes equity and inclusion by designing welcoming learning environments for and with all teens in the community, including those unserved or underserved by the library
• Collaborates with library and community partners to ensure all library staff contribute to a positive learning environment for teens

Transforming
• Connects the library to resources needed for creating and maintaining an environment conducive to formal and informal learning experiences
• Connects library staff and administration to information about developmentally appropriate learning environments for teens with others, including library staff and administrators
• Regularly reflects on the effectiveness of learning environments to support teen needs, interests, development, culture, learning styles, and abilities and makes changes as warranted
• Teaches, mentors, and coaches others about how to foster and manage library learning environments that meet the needs of all teens
• Connects current theories, research, resources, best practices, and policies related to the design of learning environments for/with teens
• Advocates for essential resources to support an inclusive, welcoming environment for/with all teens
• Models appropriate use and behavior within teen learning environments for other library staff and volunteers

Content Area 4: Learning Experiences (formal & informal)

Works with teens, volunteers, community partners, and others to plan, implement, and evaluate year-round, high-quality, developmentally appropriate formal and informal learning activities that support teens’ personal and academic interests.

Libraries have always been associated with learning. Library staff provide formal and informal learning experiences for teens resulting in teens’ ability to construct their own learning about topics that are important to them, build nontraditional and “nontested” skills and literacies, develop 21st-century skills, content knowledge, and expertise, engage in peer-supported learning, and connect with a broader community of others interested in the same topics.

Developing
• Understands how teens learn, explore career options, and develop life skills through relationships, coaching, mentoring, and interest-driven activities
• Understands the connected learning framework and that all teens learn and develop through active participation and choice
• Recognizes that change, stress, and transition affect teen social emotional development, behavior, and engagement
• Recognizes the importance of developing and following a plan of action to facilitate and implement year-round learning across all aspects of service, from collections to programs to community engagement
• Recognizes the value of assessment and assists in evaluating the effectiveness of learning experiences
• Identifies and obtains resources necessary to support year-round teen learning experiences

Practicing
• Encourages teens to be inquisitive and try new activities and opportunities
• Uses a broad collection of effective teaching strategies, tools, and accommodations to meet individual teen needs, build on cultural strengths, address learning differences, and enhance learning
• Builds activities and interactions year-round that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, intellectual openness, and multiple literacies
• Encourages teens to participate in the design and implementation of formal and informal learning activities throughout the year
• Builds learning outcomes into the design and implementation of learning activities

Transforming
• Connects the library to community resources that support teen learning experiences
• Collaborates with other organizations, groups, and agencies to maximize year-round learning opportunities for/with teens
• Reflects on effectiveness of learning activities to support teen needs, interests, development, culture, learning styles, and abilities and makes appropriate changes
• Assists in strategic planning and goal setting for the improvement of year-round learning activities
• Connects current theories, research, resources, best practices and policies related to the design and implementation of year-round learning experiences
• Coaches and mentors others in the development of library policies that support teen formal and informal learning through libraries
• Advocates for and seeks out essential resources to support year-round teen learning

Content Area 5: Youth Engagement and Leadership
Responds to all teens’ interests and needs, and acts in partnership with teens to plan and implement library activities and to foster teen leadership.

Library staff actively support the age group in developing personal agency, and in cultivating cultural, personal, and social relationships. Providing teens with opportunities to engage in youth voice experiences centered on co-learning and co-designing library and community projects is essential. These activities give teens the ability to develop their leadership skills and to create change in their lives and in the world around them.

Developing
• Supports active engagement of all teens in developing library collections, programs, and services
• Shares leadership role with teens and provides opportunities for teens to contribute knowledge and skills to teen collections, services, activities, and programs
• Fosters teens’ critical thinking, goal setting, problem-solving, conflict management, decision-making, and other important life skills
• Provides meaningful opportunities for youth voice to be included in library collection development, planning, programs, and activities

Practicing
• Engages teens in leadership activities in ways that are meaningful to them and that build a variety of interpersonal and workforce-ready skills
• Promotes teen-initiated and teen-led library collection development, programs, and services throughout the year
• Designs activities that support teen acquisition of self-confidence, and leadership and teamwork skills
• Develops teens’ capacity for self-reflection, communication, empathy, and appreciation of diverse opinions and cultures
• Encourages teens in opportunities to connect with the community through service learning and civic engagement projects

Transforming
• Connects with others to amplify youth voice in library and community planning and activities
• Advocates for and develops policies that recognize and support teen engagement and leadership
• Connects current theories, research, and best practices related to teen leadership and engagement
• Assesses activities and programs to support teen leadership development
• Advocates in the library and community for expanded pathways for all youth to be heard and assume leadership roles, especially those from traditionally marginalized communities

Content Area 6: Community and Family Engagement
Builds respectful, reciprocal relationships with community organizations and families to promote optimal development for teens and to enhance the quality of library services.

Teens carry out their lives in multiple settings including parks, out-of-school-time organizations, schools, public libraries, places of worship, jobs, and home. To create seamless opportunities for gaining social and life skills, through formal and informal learning, library staff work with community organizations, schools, and families. To do this, staff implement culturally competent practices to connect teens and their families to the information and resources they need.

Developing
• Maintains open, friendly, cooperative, and respectful relationships with families, community partners, and other library staff and administrators
• Communicates regularly with other library staff, family, and community members about library collections, services, and resources
• Identifies and uses community resources to support and assist teens and their families and to enhance teen library collections, programs, and services
• Works effectively with families from a variety of cultural, linguistic,
ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds
• Fosters an asset-based lens to understand the larger community context within which teens and their families live and to identify potential community partners
• Recognizes the relationship between teen services and the library’s mission and goals
• Understands the value of conducting a community needs assessment to inform the development of teen services priorities
• Recognizes the influence of community norms on relationships, environment, and learning, and the implications these have for library services

Practicing
• Builds and demonstrates reciprocal and cooperative relationships with other library staff and administrators, families, and community partners to meet the needs of all teens, including the unserved and underserved
• Engages library staff, families, and community partners in regular discussions and activities to improve library collections and services, and to promote engagement in support of teen library services
• Applies strategies to promote the value of high-quality teen library services as part of the overall library’s mission and goals through library strategic planning and governance, and the political process
• Implements and supports best and promising practices for volunteer programs that support teen services

Transforming
• Connects with others to assess teen and community needs
• Expands relationship with library and community partners to ensure equitable and inclusive services for/with all teens throughout the community
• Represents teens in collaborative community endeavors to support learning, development, and well-being
• Teaches, mentors, and coaches others about how best to promote and implement community and family engagement
• Advocates for and designs library policies that support teen, family, and community engagement
• Connects current theories, research, and best practices as they relate to community and family engagement
• Interprets community needs assessments to guide the development of teen collections, services, and programs

Content Area 7: Cultural Competency and Responsiveness
Actively promotes appreciation for cultural diversity and creates an inclusive, welcoming, and respectful library atmosphere that embraces diversity.

Library staff actively promote respect for and seek self-understanding of cultural diversity. They come to know and respect diverse cultural backgrounds and characteristics through interaction with individuals from diverse linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, and other groups, and to fully integrate the culture of diverse groups into planning, implementing, and evaluating culturally sustaining and bias-free programs, services, and workplaces. The development of complex, interconnected, and evolving cultural competencies on both personal and organizational levels requires dedication and cumulative and consistent work.

Developing
• Is aware of own cultural beliefs and practices
• Recognizes and values cultural differences in teens, families, and communities, including how cultural differences affect interactions with peers, adults, and institutions such as the library
• Communicates the value of equity and inclusion in library services for and with teens
• Recognizes and supports individual expression respecting cultural influences
• Recognizes barriers such as racism, ethnocentrism, classism, heterosexism, genderism, ableism, and other systems of discrimination and exclusion in the community and its institutions, including the library, and interrupts them by way of culturally competent services

Practicing
• Describes own understanding of different cultural groups, including one’s own cultural identities, beliefs, practices, and biases
• Describes cultural and environmental effects on learning, behavior, and development and the implications this has for library collections, programs, and services
• Creates inclusive, welcoming, and respectful library spaces, collections, and services for and with all teens and their families
• Builds relationships with culturally specific organizations and other relevant community partners to improve and expand library services

Transforming
• Models the use of culturally diverse materials and resources through collections, services, and programs to support the cultural identity, beliefs, and practices of all teens and families
• Connects library services, including collection development, reference and user services, outreach, and programming, with the experiences and cultures of the community
• Advocates for and designs library policies that are culturally respect-
ful and that promote equity and inclusion in teen library services

- Expands relationships with community partners to design and implement projects that support cultural experiences and address community needs
- Advocates for hiring culturally diverse library staff and engaging culturally diverse volunteers

**Content Area 8: Equity of Access**

*Ensures access to a wide variety of library resources, services, and activities for and with all teens, especially those facing challenges to access.*

Library staff actively break down barriers of access (intellectual, digital, and physical) and ensure that all teens have equitable access to resources, services, and programs. They model the change society wants to see with respect to confronting various forms of oppression (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) that can be manifested in library policies, practices, and the dispositions of library staff.

**Developing**

- Recognizes the impact limited access to services and resources has on the day-to-day experiences and future opportunities of many teens, particularly those with the most need
- Communicates the value of intellectual freedom and equitable and inclusive access to library resources and services for teens and their families
- Recognizes the role the whole library and community play in supporting equitable and inclusive teen access to resources and services
- Fosters relationships with community members and families to advance equitable and inclusive services for and with teens and help teens build digital citizenship skills
- Provides unfettered access to information, including information of special interest to the particular cultural groups within the community
- Identifies opportunities to increase equitable and inclusive access to resources and services through the library and the community

**Practicing**

- Designs and implements library services that expand access for teens of all cultures and abilities, including those who are unserved or underserved
- Partners with other community members and agencies to ensure teens have the broadest possible access to library collections, resources, and services
- Collaborates with the whole community and families to ensure equitable access to collections, resources, and services for all teens
- Delivers library services and programs inside and outside the library to ensure equitable access for/with all teens that support the development of digital citizenship skills
- Creates opportunities for teens to actively engage in speaking up for the need for equitable and inclusive access to library services
- Encourages the creation and dissemination of information resources that meet teen and community interests and needs

**Transforming**

- Mentors and coaches others on intellectual freedom principles and how to promote and implement equitable access in teen library services
- Analyzes and applies current theories, research, and best practices related to equitable access for/with teens
- Advocates for and creates policies that support intellectual freedom principles and equitable and inclusive access for/with teens
- Expands access to information and resources that support teen needs and interests and fosters digital citizenship skills

**Content Area 9: Outcomes and Assessment**

*Focuses on the impact of library programs for and with teens and uses data to inform service development and implementation.*

When focusing on the impact that services have on teen lives, library staff develop services that have meaning in teens’ lives and in their futures. Having a clear plan for the outcomes-based assessment of library activities for and with teens guarantees that library staff can evaluate practices and make changes to better support all teens. With clear assessments in hand, library staff articulate and advocate for the value of the work they do with and for teens to colleagues, administrators, families, community partners, decision-makers, and elected officials.

**Developing**

- Follows the library’s strategic plan and works to understand its role in assessment
- Recognizes the importance of library programmatic evaluation and knows it is an ongoing process
- Communicates and interprets library evaluation methods
- Supports collecting information and data to determine library program effectiveness
- Maintains confidentiality regarding evaluation information and results
- Understands program planning and evaluation
- Applies evaluation findings to library program development and implementation

**Practicing**

- Develops a strategic plan for teen services that aligns with the library’s
mission and community needs, and uses the plan as part of the assessment process

- Engages in ongoing assessment of teen services using relevant methods and resources, including as they relate to equity and inclusion
- Collects and organizes information to measure teen outcomes while following relevant procedures for observation and assessment
- Selects and uses results from assessments in planning and implementing learning activities, and does so in a way that maintains patron confidentiality
- Implements formal and informal assessments for individual and group learning
- Selects relevant assessment methods and tools for measuring teen outcomes, including longitudinal data, to measure short-term and long-term impact and progress
- Uses data-driven practices to inform decision-making related to equitable and inclusive teen library services

Transforming

- Evaluates progress toward strategic plan goals and adjusts as needed
- Advocates for informal and formal assessments in teen services
- Analyzes and evaluates observation and assessment data, and applies lessons learned to practice and decision-making
- Interprets assessment results and communicates them in a clear and supportive manner
- Connects current theories, research, best practices, and policies relevant to outcomes and assessment
- Connects with community to create partnerships for assessment with internal and external evaluators and researchers

Content Area 10: Continuous Learning

**Acts ethically, is committed to continuous learning, and advocates for best library practices and policies for teen services.**

Library staff proactively engage in ongoing learning to position themselves to support the experiences and environments needed to support teen development. Continuous learning requires regular evaluation of one’s own current knowledge and experience, in relation to the community and teens, and seeking out opportunities to fill gaps and increase understanding. Continuous learners actively seek out others (both in the library field and community) to learn from and with.

**Developing**

- Seeks knowledge of current trends, emerging technologies, issues, research, and best practices in library and information science, teen development, education, and allied fields
- Seeks knowledge regarding the impact of inequity on teens, their families, and their communities, and the need to create equitable and inclusive teen library services
- Seeks new knowledge regarding cultural values, beliefs, and practices
- Identifies professional development requirements of the field and demonstrates awareness of professional standards
- Follows a professional development plan
- Identifies qualities of leadership and ethical behavior
- Is aware of relevant professional standards, such as YALSA’s Core Professional Values
- Accepts role as a co-learner with teens
- Follows the highest standards of the profession, including those articulated by ALA and YALSA

**Practicing**

- Builds personal and professional competency by using authoritative and relevant services and resources
- Participates in activities, projects, and events within the library and allied fields
- Develops and implements a personal professional development plan
- Displays leadership skills and behaves in an ethical manner
- Applies YALSA’s Core Professional Values to everyday work
- Engages with teens as a co-learner in library activities and programs
- Practices ongoing self-reflection, self-assessment, and problem-solving strategies to promote professional growth
- Engages in continuous collaborative professional development
- Creates professional development, leadership, and advocacy opportunities for others
- Participates actively in leadership roles in the library and in professional organizations

**Transforming**

- Evaluates and selects resources for ongoing professional development for self and others
- Mentors graduate students, volunteers, and library staff, including new librarians and library staff
- Increases others’ understanding of professional standards such as those from ALA and YALSA
- Models what it is like to be a co-learner with community members for other library staff and volunteers
In recent years, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion—or EDI as it is commonly called—has become a particular focus of the American Library Association (ALA) and YALSA. The following are some helpful resources for examining how to support EDI through outcomes and assessment.

**ODLOS: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report III**
Available at [http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/diversity/edi](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/diversity/edi)

A great place to start

In January 2019, the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS) submitted its “Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report III.” This report begins with an “Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Timeline,” documenting the recent history of EDI in ALA, starting in 2016. The documents mentioned in this report offer an excellent overview of the steps ALA has taken to address EDI and are recommended.

The previous report, the “Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report II,” submitted in January 2018, ends with a list of sixty-one recommendations, broken into six major topic areas: (1) Conference Programming Planning, (2) ALA Actions for All Annual Conferences, (3) Working with Community for All ALA Host Cities, (4) Association Priorities and Planning, (5) Membership and Participation, and (6) Recruitment, Education and Retention.

Included are specific recommendations for assessment and evaluation. For example, 4.15: “Survey the membership on a triennial basis about issues related to EDI, using the TFs surveys as examples of the topics to be explored,” and 5.3: “Assess existing pathways to professional success within the organization for underrepresented groups; make suggestions to fill gaps,” and 6.2: “Assess ALA’s mentor programs for equity, diversity, and inclusion.”

As noted in the report, five ALA divisions are represented, including YALSA. The report includes specific examples of how these divisions have implemented the recommendations and lists them by number.

Another related report is the “YALSA Advancing Diversity Task Force Report” ([http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/2018/10/05/advancing-diver-](http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/2018/10/05/advancing-diver-)}

**Research Roundup: Supporting EDI Through Outcomes and Assessment**

Welcome to Research Roundup. The purpose of this recurring column is to make the vast amount of research related to youth and families accessible to you. To match the theme of the summer issue, this Research Roundup column focuses on how equity, diversity, and inclusion can be supported through outcomes and assessment.

Julie Ann Winkelstein
This report emerged from the work done by this Task Force, through a survey, a focus group and two subcommittees, one on research and one on best practices. As is pointed out in the report, “diversity” means not only a diverse membership but also inclusion and taking into account “that not everyone faces the same barriers to speaking up.” That is, we cannot simply count people and consider our job in committing to EDI.

Situations related to YALSA’s diversity initiative are pointed out in the report, “diversity-taskforce-report/). This report draws on literature and best practices, as well as the results of the survey and the focus group. Suggestions for evaluating and assessing progress toward EDI include:

• A yearly open-ended questionnaire about internal attitudes toward diversity and opportunities to participate in YALSA programs and leadership, in order to provide qualitative data regarding inclusion and awareness.

• A yearly focus group, possibly organized to take place during the YALSA Symposium, that gathers detailed feedback on the progress of YALSA’s diversity initiative. This report is also recommended, especially since it offers personal comments and suggestions from both members and nonmembers of YALSA, as well as examples of what other organizations are doing to follow up on their commitment to EDI.

YALSA also offers “YALSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan” (http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/2018_YALSA_EDI%20Plan.pdf). Five goals are included in this plan, and outcomes and assessments are parts of the strategies in four of these. For example, under “Goal 1: Create an inclusive, equitable, and welcoming organizational environment” we see:

• Provide feedback mechanisms for participants in webinars, listserv discussions, committee meetings, and conference programs to ensure they are inclusive and respond to incidents of bias, harassment, discrimination, and intolerance if necessary

• Conduct yearly surveys and periodic focus groups with YALSA members and potential members to help the association understand EDI perspectives related to YALSA’s organizational environment

Outside of ALA/YALSA

In her presentation at the 2004 National Diversity in Libraries Conference, “How to Know If It’s Real: Assessing Diversity and Organizational Climate,” (https://www.libqual.org/documents/admin/Williams_presentation.pdf), Jane Williams offers suggestions for assessing the impact of diversity initiatives in libraries and stresses the important contributions assessments can make. Drawing from a variety of sources, including examples of assessments that have been done, she provides insights into the process of assessment and includes samples of outcomes.

She recommends starting by defining diversity and establishing what variables are important to the organization. As she says, “In other words, measure the right things.” She emphasizes the importance of having managerial support, assurance of anonymity, a clear definition of any terms used in the survey, as well as the environment being assessed. Williams particularly highlights the importance of providing opportunities for input from all employees. For example, the survey done at her workplace was done in person rather than virtually.

YALSA as an organization can benefit from these suggestions, by creating personal and interactive opportunities for YALSA members and nonmembers to offer their honest opinions about how YALSA has approached EDI and how they rate the success of current approaches.


They begin by pointing out that an organization should be prepared for three possible outcomes from an evaluation and should be prepared to address each of them: progress, no progress, and unexpected change. They recommend bringing in a consultant who can provide a broad and objective perspective, but they also emphasize the importance of ascertaining the consultant has the appropriate skills and is familiar with the type of organization.

They include a concise list of action steps related to evaluation. These include: focusing on “the goals and objectives of the diversity initiative, gathering data through multiple methods, identifying the barriers and communicating the findings.” This fourth step is particularly relevant to YALSA—keeping communication channels open and highlighting the work that’s being done, the results of this work, and emphasizing it as an ongoing, constant, ever-present commitment to working on a project that will never have an endpoint.

Concluding Thoughts

These are all examples of how we can support EDI through outcomes and assessments, but we must ask: What do we do with the information we gather? If YALSA sets goals and recommends actions, but there is no follow through, then what? What does a commitment really mean? Jane
Williams addresses this question by saying: “Assessment without action can negatively impact organizational climate.” YALSA must take these words to heart—it’s not enough to know how EDI is progressing, there must be direct action in response to using assessment to look at the outcomes.

As Jennifer Eberhardt tells us in her outstanding book, Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do (2019):

It turns out that diversity itself is not a remedy, though it may be a route to eliminating bias. But we have to be willing to go through the growing pains that diversity entails… Success requires us to be willing to tolerate that discomfort as we learn to communicate, get to know one another, and make deeper efforts to shift the underlying cultures that lead to bias and exclusion. (pp. 291–292)

This discomfort needs to be identified and then embraced, because it is this discomfort that will indicate we are moving toward EDI. If EDI were simple, if people were easily able to be self-aware, to lose their unconscious biases, to step aside, to disturb the power structures and be open to changes that could affect their positions—if this were effortlessly possible, we would not need these documents, these plans. YALSA is a reflection of society and in our society inequality, inequity, bias, and prejudice exist. So, while these recommended steps of outcomes and assessment should be used, most of all we need to practice every day, all the time. We need to be uncomfortable, to question, to read, to reach out, to engage, to lead with EDI. Each of us. Always.

After 20 years as a public librarian, Julie Ann Winkelstein, PhD, MLIS, currently writes, teaches and conducts research on topics related to the intersection of social justice and libraries.

Find, share, and discuss teen programming ideas with other library staff and educators.

http://hq.yalsa.net/index.html
When people ask what I do for a living, I often hesitate to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The partial truth, the one I am comfortable sharing, is that I research video games and learning; the whole truth is that I research mathematics learning in video games in particular. I have learned over the years not to admit my love for mathematics, after repeatedly receiving awkward grimaces as the response, followed by, “Oh, er . . .” and a rapid change to talking about the weather. This is because when I use the word mathematics, what I mean by that word is fundamentally different from what other people hear when I say the word.

To me, mathematics is beauty—M. C. Escher, and worlds with dimensions I can barely imagine, and unexpected patterns that reveal themselves slowly and teach me something new about what it means to be human, and a moment of relaxation with a cup of coffee at the dawn of a new day. To others, mathematics is dull repetition—equations that must be memorized and used in consistent but illogical ways, a space where nothing makes sense but following orders, a memory of dull forty-five-minute classes that ground by slowly in school every day. So really, what I do is research how to show people to see and play with mathematics the way that I do.

One of the reasons why I care so much about helping others see my version of mathematics has to do with a type of aesthetic confusion—my life feels like I’m walking around a museum that opens with a hallway of Mondrians, leading to the Mona Lisa surrounded by Georgia O’Keeffe, with a garden filled with the materialized inspirations of Yayoi Kusama. But I’m confused that to most people this beauty I see is just an empty building with a weed-riddled backyard.

Another reason, one that aligns with this summer’s theme of “equity, diversity, and inclusion,” is that somehow, the way that we teach math in the United States filters out most of the women and nonbinary people from pursuing math-related careers, as well as people of color, which doubly penalizes women and nonbinary people of color. As a broad educational institution, we actively discourage the majority of students from pursuing such careers, despite the fact that this discouraged majority is just as qualified at mathematics as the students who are actively encouraged to pursue mathematics further.

So what can we do to counteract this national outrage in our library-based work with youth? We can curate a collection of beautiful digital interactions in video games, that quietly push against assumptions of mathematics as procedure-based memorization. I have picked my four favorite mathematical video games, and describe them below—they are all games that you can just leave lying around for youth to enjoy, or that you can recommend to youth you overhear complaining about math class, letting them know that these games are math too!

For those librarians seeking to develop more overtly mathematical learning opportunities, each of these games could be used to ground specific content, but the
novel representations of mathematics in each game mean that game play experiences won’t immediately translate or transfer to more formal mathematical assessments. In other words, playing one of these games may not result in better performance in the traditional mathematics classroom, although I believe (and am researching this right now in more detail!) that a discussion that overtly bridges from the game to the classroom version of mathematics will help increase classroom performance. Regardless, these mathematics games will show youth what it means to see mathematics in the world and play with it, the way that I do.

**Monument Valley**
https://www.monumentvalleygame.com/mv1

Description: *Monument Valley* combines mathematics and art in a beautiful way, acting through the princess Ida who is exploring a strange, quirky, impossible world, puzzle by puzzle. Players manipulate the world through twisting and dragging on the touch screen, and seeing how the world morphs (sometimes impossibly!) in accordance with their movements. The game is long enough for youths to experience a rich and complex context, but short enough for them to finish after a couple of after-school library visits. Artistic youth will also love this game! Best experienced with headphones (the soundscape is amazing). *Monument Valley II* is also now available.

Platform and cost: iOS or Android; $3.99

Mathematical content: The geometry and logic of space, à la M. C. Escher.

**Dragonbox 12+**
https://dragonbox.com/products/algebra-12

Description: *Dragonbox 12+* is the only game included on this list that was intentionally designed to teach mathematics—clearly, the designers see mathematics as I do, as this is *not* one of those math games that perpetuates the procedural nature of school mathematics. Instead, players move different symbols (such as angry tomatoes and toothy green fish) from one side of the screen to the other in mathematically constrained ways, seeking to isolate the Box symbol. The puzzles get more and more complex as the game goes on, and the game introduces new mathematics (such as fractions and multiplication) and representations (such as dice faces or $x$) and slowly transitions the players into interacting with full-fledged complex equations. The game is quite long and well suited to being put down and picked up again a day or a week later. It is best experienced with headphones, as the sounds are quite amusing and contribute to the fun. The creators of *Dragonbox 12+* also have other math-related games.

Platform and cost: Most computer platforms (Apple OS and iOS; Android; Windows), although best experienced with a touch pad; $7.99.

**The Witness**
http://the-witness.net/news/

Description: *The Witness* is a non-language-based puzzle pattern game that takes place on a beautiful island. This game is very long, with the designer estimating that it will take a player eighty hours to complete the 650 different (and often very challenging) puzzles. Each puzzle is a grid of varying size (for example, a grid of three-by-three dots that are either white or black), with different mathematical rules that constrain the path that the player must adhere to in order to successfully traverse the grid (for example, the path must separate the dots so that the white dots are never directly adjacent to the black dots). Some puzzles are egregiously difficult and discouraging, so if you see a player who seems to have stopped enjoying the game, ask them if you should peek at an online walk-through and give them a hint! The game is interspersed with thought-provoking quotes from a

To me, mathematics is beauty—M. C. Escher, and worlds with dimensions I can barely imagine, and unexpected patterns that reveal themselves slowly and teach me something new about what it means to be human, and a moment of relaxation with a cup of coffee at the dawn of a new day.
variety of people, to add the deep philosophical background that the
designer is famous for.
Platform and cost: Most computer and console platforms (Apple OS and
iOS; Windows; PlayStation 4; Xbox 1; Shield Android Console); each plat-
form, $39.99.
Mathematical content: Discrete mathematics (graph theory), specifically
through patterns with vertices and edges.

**Paperclips**
http://www.decisionproblem.com/paperclips/index2.html

Description: *Paperclips* is a thought-provoking and sneakily en-
joyable click-based game, where the player is positioned as an artificial
telligence (AI) that has been tasked with efficiently creating paperclips.

As the game progresses, the player—acting as the AI—seeks to produce
paperclips more and more efficiently with the available resources, and
slowly expands the available resour-
ces to include more and more of the
available matter (including people!).
The game has a very simple user in-
terface that stays simple even as the
system of resources becomes more
complex, and there are no graphics
beyond minimal text and simple
buttons. The game is long enough
for a day or so of erratic playing, and
make sure you let youth know that
yes, there is in fact an ending!
Platform and cost: Web-based (with
mobile versions); free.
Mathematical content: Exponential
growth, fluid minimizing and maxi-
mizing of resources.

**CARO WILLIAMS-PIERCE** is an assistant professor at the University of Maryland,
College Park, in the College of Information Studies. Her lifelong love of both
mathematics and video games has caused her to investigate mathematics learning
in video games, with a particular focus on backgrounding formal mathematical
notation in order to support authentic mathematical play. In particular,
Dr. Williams-Pierce believes that the rampant mathophobia developed in
formal mathematics classrooms in the United States can be offset by voluntary
engagement with beautiful and playful mathematical interactions.
White Kids Need Diverse Books, Too

In a round of public talks and workshops in the spring of 2019, I had the pleasure of talking to quite a few youth services librarians about equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), and why it matters in librarianship. For the most part, such talks go well and I am met with interested and receptive audiences, even if they don’t always know how to actualize the concepts I present. I talk a lot about cultural competence, cultural humility, privilege, racism, social justice, intersectionality, etc. (Cooke, 2016). While some of these are currently trendy topics, if the conversations are done well, they can be difficult and sometimes uncomfortable, as we all come to grips with our own shortcomings, knowledge gaps, and inherent biases. With this said, doing this work is amazingly rewarding, and if I can reach a few people during these talks, I am satisfied.

During the question-and-answer period of one of these sessions, a librarian asked how to promote diverse books to their predominantly white community; they said that the only diverse book their young adults would interact with was The Hate You Give by Angie Thomas. As a result of this low interaction, they were considering removing the diverse titles from the collection because they seemed to be a “waste of time and money.” I did not have a good initial reaction to this question, particularly after having just spent the last hour discussing the imperative of EDI in our profession and our workplaces. Honestly, I was taken aback. I responded and told the questioner that I had to push back on this assertion that having diverse materials in the collection was a waste of time and money; rather, I view such collections as an investment, and I would rather have their young adults have the opportunity to access these materials than not have any options at all. I also reminded the audience that diverse materials serve as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors (Bishop, 1990) for people to learn about themselves and other cultures. I realize that the question originated, in part, from the librarian not really understanding how to promote diverse materials, but I am also concerned that perhaps they themselves are not culturally competent and only buy diverse materials because they think (or have been told) they should. If they don’t value diverse books, neither will their community.

This experience represents a common phenomenon—the tokenizing and devaluation of EDI in librarianship. It’s called “trendy” or ascribed to those who are “politically correct” and is often and openly associated with materials that are of “low quality” that are unfairly assigned value because they check the diversity box. This phenomenon parallels that of people who espouse the virtues of EDI but don’t actually practice or implement the tenets. As a LIS educator and researcher who focuses on EDI, I give considerable thought to the question: how do we teach EDI and cultural competence, in such a way that it is actualized, and moves from theory into honest-to-goodness practice? What follows in this essay are some of the thoughts I have about and my hopes for all library professionals who work with diverse populations, especially with diverse and/or marginalized young adults.
The Value of Diverse Books
In her beautiful and deservedly popular TED talk, *The Danger of Single Story* novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) describes growing up in Nigeria, and how the American and British books she read as a child narrowly shaped and influenced her early writing attempts and perceptions of who people in those countries were. It was only when she discovered the works of African writers did she discover that world is a much richer and more complex place. She recalls her newfound literary realizations by testifying:

What this demonstrates, I think, is how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children. Because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books by their very nature had to have foreigners in them and had to be about things with which I could not personally identify. Now, things changed when I discovered African books. There weren’t many of them available, and they weren’t quite as easy to find as the foreign books. But because of writers like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye, I went through a mental shift in my perception of literature. I realized that people like me, girls with skin the color of chocolate, whose kinky hair could not form ponytails, could also exist in literature. I started to write about things I recognized. Now, I loved those American books. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature. So what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: It saved me from having a single story of what books are. Adichie goes on to describe attending college in the United States and sharing a room with an American student who was surprised by how well she spoke English, amazed that she knew how to use a stove, and was disappointed when she proffered Mariah Carey as her favorite singer.

Children’s and young adult literature have long been critiqued for being too white, homogeneous, and in effect perpetuating a single story. Lack of perspective and diversity of thought can become dangerous, particularly to impressionable youth who don’t see themselves in books and consequently are at risk of developing a skewed perception of what the real world actually looks like. To this end, in her classic essay *Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors*, educator Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) states:

When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part.

Bishop’s work, which is also applicable to young adult literature, describes the landscape of children’s literature as being predominated by images of majority children (white children), which can serve to isolate minority children and inflate the self-importance of majority children. This lack of reflection and representation can
be considered a form of information poverty. A term with a nearly fifty-year history, information poverty explains knowledge gaps or barriers to knowledge as a result of understanding of cultural patterns and/or a lack of processing skills (such as literacy levels, language barriers, or physical impairments). Frequently discussed in regard to the digital divide and the lack of technological access and literacy, information poverty can reflect a lack of understanding resulting from a lack of access, in this case, a lack of representation in youth literature. Library and information science scholar Elfreda Chatman (1996) highlighted information poverty in her research, suggesting that the availability of information is a determining factor of how people use and are shaped by information, including their responses to everyday problems and concerns. Therefore, a lack of information can alter one’s context and way of interacting with the world. Britz (2004) continues the description of information poverty by stating that is “characterized by a lack of essential information and a poorly developed information infrastructure” (p. 192). A lack of diversity and representations of social justice scenarios can constitute information poverty, with the deficiency rooted in the infrastructure of children’s and young adult literature, namely, a lack of diverse stories, authors and publishers.

Instead of this imbalance and preponderance of information poverty, there should be opportunity for young readers of all stripes to be able to see themselves in literature (mirrors), they should be afforded the opportunity to learn about the cultures and experiences of others (windows), and, hopefully, they will learn to develop understanding and empathy for those who are different from them (sliding glass doors). This is precisely what happened with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; African literature allowed her to see and appreciate her own self and provided her entrée into new worlds. Youth literature plays an important role in developing literacy in our library users—from traditional literacy (as it relates to reading), to visual literacy, to cultural literacy—and can aid in the elimination of information poverty, as it pertains to diversity and social justice, in children’s literature. Exposing readers of all ages to the messages contained in children’s literature can have lasting and beneficial effects, and can shape how readers view the world. It is for this reason that it is vitally important to examine the social justice messages that exist in the current literature and to advocate for even more social justice and diversity in the world of youth literature. Hughes-Hassell (2013) explicitly suggests that youth literature can be a vehicle for counter-storytelling, which is described as “a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told,” including people of color, women, gays, and the poor (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26), and serves “to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority” (Delgado & Stefancic, 1995, p. 144). It is the phenomenon of counter-storytelling that makes depictions of diversity and social justice in youth literature particularly valuable and compelling. In this way, youth literature is an especially dynamic and useful tool for both educational and leisure purposes, a tool that has no age limits.

The value of diverse books, for all readers, is well documented; this includes teaching respect for all cultures, seeing through the diverse mirrors and doors, learning how to interact in the world, and enriching the reality of readers. And the precursors of social justice advocacy and activism, such as self-reflection, empathy, and cultural competence, are also clearly present in diverse titles such as *The Hate You Give*, *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds, *The Sun Is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon, *Griogolaid* by Lyn Miller-Lachmann, *March* by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell, *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo, and so many more. How can these titles be thought to only be of value to diverse youth? These stories and the messages within are valuable to all youth and readers. How can this message be incorporated into the education and practice of future librarians (not just youth librarians), so we move away from the notion that diverse books are not valuable if majority youth and teens don’t automatically gravitate toward them? How do we lessen the information poverty in youth literature?

“When did you ‘Get It’?”

While grappling with the anecdote I shared at the beginning of this essay, I reached out to my network of library colleagues who also engage in some form of EDI work. I asked the following questions:

For my colleagues committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion, especially those that work with young adults and children, when did you “get it”? How did you come to this work and why do you keep doing it?

Some of the responses were interesting, others were truly inspiring. The initial responses were tips and strategies about how to promote the diverse materials in the collection (e.g., book talks, programs, book discussions, etc.). Strategies are great, but not what I was trying to elicit. It was, however, interesting to see that immediate reactions went right to practice and practicality but did not address the theory or belief that diverse collections are inherently valuable and that library professionals should ideally be...

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1The *We Need Diverse Books* campaign is an example of a recent initiative designed to raise awareness about this long-standing issue (http://weneeddiversebooks.org).
culturally competent when working with communities that differ from their own. I followed up on my initial questions with this comment:

So, there are two levels here: the personal and the practical. That is, if this librarian doesn’t actually believe in the value/power of diverse texts, then they won’t try any of the practical suggestions, no matter how good they are. How, if at all, can we work to shift the personal part of this?

The subsequent responses and discussions that ensued were thoughtful. The major themes and/or commonalities revolved around exposure—early exposure to people, cultures, and stories that were different from theirs. When people reflect on when they “got it,” or came to gain an appreciation for others who are different, and attained some level of cultural competence (Cooke & Hill, 2017), they recall coming from a family and/or background that openly and actively discussed/enacted social justice and activism; they recalled reading books that featured different languages, cultures, perspectives, and diverse characters and taking advantage of them as the windows and sliding glass doors imagined by Rudine Sims Bishop; they recognized someone else’s marginal status (e.g., being queer, being Muslim, etc.) that enabled them to be able to recognize the marginalities, privileges, and injustices of others; they recognized and appreciated the activism of others; and they were deeply affected by world events (e.g., the racial uprisings in Ferguson and Baltimore; the death of Sandra Bland). “Getting it” and becoming committed to EDI work comes in a variety of ways, but all of these instances were profound and long-lasting for the people experiencing them, and in many cases these experiences opened the door for future antiracism work and eagerness to engage with people different from them and embrace their stories.

Other lessons from people consistently engaged in EDI work with youth include realizing that no community is “all white”; if you think your community has no diversity, you’re not paying attention and/or you are not aware of the people not coming into your library. And why is that? Also, when working with youth, library professionals should develop a common language to discuss complicated issues, and lay the groundwork with diverse and quality young adult literature that will prepare young adults for a global society and encourage them to live up to their full potential as human beings. Because in the end, we all benefit from diversity and dismantling systemic oppressions. Finally, we should be going beyond the “big names” of diverse literature (e.g., Angie Thomas, Elizabeth Acevedo, and others who have won awards or had movies made from their work).

As author Carleen Brice states:

One thing we all seem to agree on is that it sure would be nice if our books reached a wider audience, meaning (as it still does for a little while in this country) White folks. Big problem though. White readers don’t hear about our books discussed generally (except Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and a few others). And without media exposure and water-cooler talk they don’t know which of our books they may like. Even worse, many White readers don’t know that books by Black authors can even speak to them, and be enjoyed by them.

We need to be doing this work of broadening the reading horizons of our young adults. There is so much great diverse literature available that it should not be a burden for library professionals to promote these titles to all youth. These endeavors take personal reflection, cultural and intellectual humility, a willingness to learn, and they require time and consistent effort. But it’s so worth it to be able to promote the mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors that will enable our youth to avoid the trap of having a single story or view of the world.

Finally, I will conclude by providing resources suggested by colleagues who are EDI advocates. Instead of trying to summarize the candor, beauty, and critical self-reflection of these authors, I will encourage you to read their words for yourself. I will also have their insights in mind the next time I have someone suggest to me that diverse collections are a waste of time and money.

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I would also recommend the following websites that are equally instructive and thought-provoking:


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References
Assessing Learning and Engagement in Library Makerspaces: It’s Harder Than You Think

Librarians and library staff know that the planning, designing, and facilitating of learning experiences for their patrons is more important than ever to fulfilling the mission of libraries. Consequently, assessment of those experiences is critical to making sure that patrons are in fact learning. At face value, this assessment might seem like an easy task; we all have personal experiences with tests and grades. But many of our traditional metrics in library services are insufficient to capture the richness (or intended richness) of our learning experiences. Assessment strategies from formal environments, like schools, may be inappropriate for the type of learning that occurs in a library (e.g., a multiple-choice test in a makerspace, a letter grade for a workshop). Once you start trying to match learning goals with assessment tools, it becomes clear that assessment of library learning experiences can be complicated.

We, a team of librarians and learning scientists, are currently working on a project to codesign assessment tools for library makerspaces. One of our first steps was to interview the stakeholders of library learning experiences (e.g., patrons, staff, librarians, trustees) to find out what types of information might be useful to shape and guide the different types of library learning experiences. While we are still in the early stages of our three-year time line, we wanted to share what we have already learned as it has implications for what could be assessed, why it should be assessed, and for whom the assessment should be given.

While these findings are not meant to be generalizable to all of our library settings, we would advocate for a similar approach to how we reached our findings. Even if done less formally, discussions about assessment can help ascertain the complexities for assessment in other spaces.

What Do We Mean by Assessment?

First, it’s important that we define what we mean by assessment since others may have different definitions or purposes for it. Specifically, even the term assessment may evoke a negative or visceral reaction because of its association with high-stakes, standardized testing in schools. For our work, we define assessment as making an evidentiary argument about learning, engagement, or a particular program (Gorin, 2013). In this way, assessment can allow us to form a chain of reasoning that connects evidence with the claims we are making (DiCerbo, Shute & Kim, 2017). We come to this definition based on learning sciences research that validates what is pragmatically known to all educators—that assessment, through the generation of summative and formative feedback, is a critical component of learning opportunities (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Summative feedback informs what someone has learned, mastered, or experienced at the end of a program or visit. Formative feedback is ongoing and informs where on a learning trajectory someone may be in their learning aim.

And when we talk about assessment, it is worth mentioning that there are other words that may communicate what we mean. Evaluation, measurement, and documentation are all words that are used to describe what we define as assessment, both for formative...
and summative purposes. One of the reasons that different words are used to describe assessment is because the collection of data is what seems to be significant to how we make an argument or claim about what is or is not happening in a particular program or activity. For assessment purposes, data can be quantitative or qualitative, depending on what is needed in order to make a case or claim about learning.

Our Assessment Work

The thrust of our project is to code-sign assessment tools with library staff to carry out assessment work in their library makerspaces and/or maker programs. This was driven by a general need that some libraries are investing time, money, and resources to maker-related programming, and they wish to know something about what is happening during or as a result of these programs. To do this, our team (University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison Public Library, University at Buffalo, Buffalo and Erie County Public Library) initially investigated three questions. These three broad questions included:

- What are we assessing?
- Why are we assessing it?
- For whom are we assessing?

As we talk to these stakeholders, we have a semistructured set of questions, but the main question we ask is, “What does it look like when a program (or the space) is really going well?” This is a difficult question, and we probe their answers by asking questions like, “How do you know?” or “What does it look like or sound like?” to ensure that our conversation is grounded in what really does or can happen in the library.

While we don’t claim that their responses will generalize to all library makerspaces, we do think that a diversity of responses would be found in other libraries, and it is within this diversity that the process of identifying what we assess begins. In the next brief sections, we will highlight some of the various perspectives we identified through our ongoing process of designing assessment tools for library makerspaces.

Why Are We Assessing?

For us, our project has started with the “why” question of assessment. While we as a team had ideas ourselves as to why assessment could be useful and important for research and practice, we also wanted to know what our stakeholders and colleagues thought. When we discussed this with our stakeholders, we received a variety of responses. While none of these reasons why are more important than others, it is certainly the case that some of these reasons why are more important than others to certain stakeholders.

A common response that was shared by the stakeholders that we talked to was that assessment was important to justify their program. As makerspaces and maker programs become a resource where money and time is invested, some might say that there is a need to provide evidence that “something good is happening,” as one stakeholder told us. It is important to note that this justification might be made specifically to a particular audience, like the leadership team of the library, or this might be made to the public more generally, as promotional and awareness-building material.

Another common response for why a stakeholder should be doing assessment was because it was a requirement. This requirement was often because a funder had required that a particular program or project have specific indicators that are tracked. This is certainly related to the justification reason mentioned earlier, but when one is required to evaluate, this is often done with limited choice exerted by the library staff connected to the makerspace.

In addition, some of the library staff stated that assessment could suggest to them whether or not the programs are addressing their intended goals or the priorities of the library. For example, if the goal of the program is to build relationships with participants, the facilitator may want to know if participants perceived that relationship building was happening; e.g., Does the facilitator know the participant’s name? Does the participant feel that their voice is heard? And so forth. This comes from the idea that assessment can help provide formative information to improve the maker-based learning experiences in the library.

What Are We Assessing?

While we know why assessment is important for us, the next step was to ask our stakeholders and colleagues what we actually want to assess. This is a challenging question because it can be an abstract question. It inevitably requires a level of specificity that we typically do not need to describe. In fact, we ask this in an indirect way with our stakeholders. As we mentioned before, we ask the stakeholders what it looks like when the
maker-based learning experience is going well. Within their response, they reveal the elements of what they value for learning and engagement in those learning experiences. And the question allows us to concretely talk about the specifics of what they would ultimately wish to assess.

For example, one librarian said that the program is going well when the participating learners feel welcome and comfortable in the space. In addition, one parent said that the program is going well when their child is working independently and is not constantly seeking the support of the parent. One community engagement librarian said that a program is going well when the participants are from the immediate neighborhood of the library.

These examples allow us to begin to think about how we will assess. While the parent’s example is observable, the librarian’s example may not be as observable and may require us to ask questions of the learner. Moreover, it encourages us to have deeper conversations about what it means to feel welcome. Similarly, the community engagement librarian’s example encourages us to think about what are the boundaries of the neighborhood, and how might we know that.

For Whom Are We Assessing?
The assessment process can be carried out for the benefit of a variety of stakeholders. Through our discussions with stakeholders, there were several specific and general audiences that they referred to. For example, when we discussed this question with the library staff, they said that they were one of the target audiences. In order to make ongoing refinements to a particular maker activity or program, they want information about whether or not the program or activity is addressing their goals.

In addition, as mentioned previously, a funder was another audience for assessment. This form of assessment was often prescribed and specific to the project or activity that was being supported by the funder.

In addition, various members of library leadership were a target audience for assessment. While this may have aligned with the justification for a program mentioned above, this was not always the case. In some cases, library staff noted that qualitative information about a library maker program is useful in the hands of leadership so that they can promote the program and talk about the program or makerspace in specific ways.

The learners themselves are one more audience mentioned by our stakeholders. Whether this is to convey a sense of accomplishment or use assessment data to recruit participants for the next program, the participants can be a significant audience for our assessment data. And when our librarians think about participants, this can include parents and caregivers as well.

Takeaways and What We Are Learning
As we continue on with our project, our challenge now is to identify specifics to what we assess and for whom. For example, how do we know if participants are having their voice heard or being creative, and how do we communicate that in a clear way to others? However, what we are trying to show here is that assessment and evaluation can be complicated to conceptualize when we really care about the data being useful and something to communicate to others. To be clear, we do not claim that all library staff involved with makerspaces will have the same responses as we have found in our own work. However, we would argue that by engaging in this reflective discussion about assessment, we can be more proactive about how we enact assessment in our libraries.

In addition, we are seeing promise in discussing what it looks like when a particular maker-based learning activity is going really well in our library. By engaging in this discussion, we have found that it orients the discussion about productive engagement—or at least positive attributes of the learning experience—to what we can see and, therefore, empirical evidence.

As a larger benefit, this discussion can support some ancillary benefits. First, this discussion about productive engagement can support the development of a collective vision for maker-based learning experiences in the library. What is the purpose of having “making?” in our library? (Wardrip, Brahms, Carrigan & Reich, 2017) As we often have a mixture of staff and partners implicated in our library maker activities, we often do not have a mechanism to shape a collective vision. In turn, this collective vision can support the development of a common language for learning in maker-based programs. For example, if the vision for maker-based learning experiences is to support the development of positive relationships with patrons, then this can form the basis for how the library staff describe and communicate those experiences.

Ultimately, discussing the aspects of productive engagement in our maker-based learning experiences can give library staff and partners a concrete point of reference for talking about learning and engagement. With a clear concept of what we’re designing and facilitating for, we can also be clearer on what we are assessing.

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For the last two years, the Capturing Connected Learning in Libraries (CCLL) project has developed new tools and practices for measuring connected learning in libraries, through collaborations between library practitioners and researchers. CCLL is an IMLS-funded research and practice collaboration among the Connected Learning Research Network, CU Boulder, SRI International, Los Angeles Public Library, YALSA, and YOUMedia. The goal of CCLL is to collaboratively develop evaluation tools and models that enable libraries to better assess learning outcomes for their connected learning programs and spaces, and to use evaluation data to improve their programs.

In this article, written by members of the CCLL research team, we will first discuss connected learning’s relationship to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and the role of evaluation in youth library programs. We then describe the implementation of new tools for evaluation that have been developed through the CCLL project’s researcher and practitioner collaborations, in the form of two case studies. Lastly, we suggest potentially useful strategies for using these tools, as well as ways they may be further adapted and expanded to address connected learning outcomes related to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Our hope is that you will walk away from this article with a better understanding of connected learning, a sense of how evaluation might be useful in your library, and some ideas about how you could adapt the evaluation tools described in this article to address issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, as they are important in your community library.

What Is Connected Learning?

Connected learning is reflected in four core principles: Connections Across Settings, Shared Purpose, Shared Practices, and Sponsorship of Youth Interests. Connected learning takes an ecological perspective on learning, considering the importance of making connections between the learning that happens at home, at school, and in informal community settings, both in person and online. Across these different settings, peers, teachers, family members, and adult mentors can help youth make connections between their interests that broaden and deepen their learning. With connected learning, mentors play an incredibly important role, acting as “brokers” to connect youth to useful resources and opportunities.

Connected learning also emphasizes learning through making in social settings. Ito et al.’s HOMAGO framework identifies three types of youth engagement in informal learning spaces: hanging out, messing around, and geeking out. “Hanging out” is when youth’s engagement is driven by spending time with friends, while “messing around” indicates experimentation with tools and materials, and “geeking out” is deeper engagement and exploration.

Connected learning’s focus on interest-driven activities invites youth agency, and when supported well, creates space for youth to bring in more of their whole identities, including cultural identities and practices. Connected learning also seeks to address issues of inequity, particularly in relation to learning with and about technology, by encouraging educators...
to understand the communities they serve and remove barriers to participation. This can be accomplished by collaboratively working with community members to design learning tools and programs.

Libraries are ideal environments to support connected learning, as they broker opportunities across school, home, and community, particularly for historically marginalized and nondominant communities. Drop-in and informal learning opportunities in libraries have the potential to create spaces where youth who are marginalized in school can engage in a different sort of learning, and access positive supportive relationships with adult mentors and community members.

**Why Evaluation?**

Providing evidence of outcomes to funders can be important to sustaining youth library programs, which often rely on grant funding. Engaging in evaluation can also be a helpful way for library staff and youth workers to reflect on their own practices, what they’re observing in the space, and illuminate areas in need of improvement.

Assessing outcomes is important in evaluation, but it can also be challenging for staff to manage while balancing their other responsibilities, goals, and priorities. Furthermore, traditional assessment methods are not only time consuming but may not fit the goals of library staff supporting youth. Certain types of valuable youth engagement, like connected learning, can be particularly hard to capture, as outcomes are more abstract than things like test scores. For these reasons, the CCLL team and their collaborators have attempted to design assessment tools that are flexible, engaging, and can reflect the goals of multiple stakeholders.

**Evaluation Case Studies**

Next, we present two case studies of library makerspaces using evaluation strategies developed through the CCLL project. While these tools were broadly designed to measure connected learning, CCLL’s library partners have used them in the context of making and tinkering programs and makerspaces.

**Case Study 1: Talkback Boards at The Studio at Anythink Libraries**

CCLL’s first partner was The Studio at Anythink Library in Thornton, CO. It was designed as a space for young people to hang out, explore new digital technologies, and go deeper with specific interest-based learning opportunities. The Studio offered drop-in programming, as well as more structured activities through The Studio’s three Experience Zones. The Experience Zones focused on 3D printing, sewing, and jewelry making, and included activities such as making woven necklaces, creating with Perler beads, and designing bookmarks. The Studio also offered scheduled classes with artists in residence.

The CCLL team first met with The Studio’s Coordinator, Mo Yang in January 2017 to develop an evaluation plan focused on strategies that would capture the outcomes Anythink and The Studio wanted to understand. Broadly, the Anythink library system wanted to understand how and when customers across demographics used The Studio, in order to develop strategies for broadening their reach within the communities the libraries were situated in. They also hoped this could inform the development of mobile kits that would scale The Studio to other branches. Within The Studio, the CCLL team and Mo focused on evaluating outcomes related to interest and skill development. Anythink’s desired outcomes, shown in the table above reflected goals around access to resources for patrons, and depth of engagement for youth participants in makerspace programming.

The CCLL team and Mo developed evaluation tools based on these outcome goals, and incorporated measures based on survey instruments previously developed by the CCLL team (available at [https://researchtools.dmlhub.net/](https://researchtools.dmlhub.net/)). The resulting evaluation plan included talkback boards geared toward evaluating youth experiences, and a daily staff survey.

**Talkback Boards**

Talkback boards, which were developed by Mo Yang for use at Anythink prior to the CCLL collaboration, presented questions or prompts for participants to respond to by selecting from several possible choices or by writing...
short responses. The Studio used talkback boards focused on interest discovery and development, HOMA-GO principles, and youth program experiences, but they also used more open-ended prompts to collect ideas for developing new programming.

Above are two examples of talkback boards developed through the 2017 CCLL and Anythink collaboration. Example 1 was designed to understand why customers came to Anythink. Responses to this talkback board indicated that hanging out and messing around or geeking out were significant factors in youth’s decisions to come to The Studio. A number of youth reported that someone suggested they come there, or in connected learning terms, they were “brokered into” the space. Based on this data, the team thought that Mo could create a follow-up talkback board to find out who was suggesting that young people go to The Studio. The open-ended “Other” section allowed participants to suggest activities that interested them, such as creating video games. This helped The Studio understand the kinds of activities their patrons wanted to engage in.

The talkback board in Example 2 was intended to capture how The Studio’s customers engaged in HOMA-GO principles. The twelve customers who wanted to “do the exact same activity” may have been messing around or geeking out. However, based on how few participants selected “Make something similar… but harder,” geeking out in terms of depth or “leveling up” was much less sought out by customers. A potential next step might be to better understand differences in perceptions among different groups of patrons, and whether some are “leveling up” more than others.

**Daily Staff Survey**
The surveys, designed to capture staff’s daily reflections on and observations of youth engagement, focused on skill development and “leveling up” and were based on constructs related to engineering and design skills (e.g., identifying a problem, or prototyping), as well as 21st-century skills (e.g., perseverance, problem-solving, technology literacy). Mo built in time at the end of every day for staff members to complete the surveys.

The survey asked staff members to record general reflections on the day and additional supports needed by staff, as well as the specific tools and skills that participants used. Because
participants often worked in different ways and on multiple projects during their time in The Studio, survey items were later added to capture which of the three focal areas (3D printing, textile design, or jewelry making) were most utilized, and the range of ways youth could engage.

Documenting details of what youth did at The Studio led to changes in the kinds of activities that were offered. For example, the popular Perler beads activity was eliminated because parents saw it as an easy “craft” for younger children than The Studio was designed to support, and because there was no clear pathway for participants to deepen their skills with another tool.

Case Study 2: Multnomah County Library

Another CCLL partner was Rockwood Library, a branch of Multnomah County Library. In 2016, the library created a makerspace for teens in an effort to address inequitable access to after-school STEAM opportunities in the area. Prior to the opening of the makerspace in Rockwood, there were few programs for teens that attended the library, and no dedicated space. The 1000-square foot makerspace filled this gap, and provided access to technology, equipment, and software. Paid and volunteer mentors with diverse expertise supported youth engagement in open-ended exploration, as well as classes on special topics.

During the makerspace’s Open Labs, youth engaged in a diverse range of self-directed activities, including playing computer games, digital design, sewing, visual arts and crafts, science experiments, and tinkering with electronics. Students could also do homework or work on outside projects. To provide opportunities for more structured learning, the makerspace also offered workshops on various topics at least once a week. The workshops often focus on digital media arts, such as game design and e-textiles. The library also ran camps during school breaks and vacations, which were run by external instructors.

The Rockwood Library makerspace’s program coordinator, Lyndsey Runyan, partnered with the CCLL team because of a desire to learn more about the 21st-century skills that participants were developing. When the collaboration began in 2017, Multnomah County Library was at the end of a three-year grant that supported the makerspace’s development. This grant included an evaluation component that was intended to track outcomes for participants in both drop-in programs and workshops requiring registration. The goal of the local grant funder was to know about long-term impacts, such as whether participants were developing interests that might be related to career development.

A primary outcome of interest for both the library and its funder was whether the makerspace supported youth in discovering and developing new interests. Another important outcome of interest was whether there was a difference in skill development for youth who participated at the makerspace regularly versus those who dropped in occasionally. Stakeholders were particularly interested in the development of skills that regular participants might use in their day-to-day lives. For internal purposes, Lyndsey wanted to know how people used the space, and what programs were worth spreading to other library locations in the Multnomah County system.

Through meetings with Lyndsey, the CCLL team developed a plan that served to help her make program improvements, while accounting for an external funder. Multnomah liked the idea of using talkback boards, which they heard about from Mo Yang and Anythink. Like the plan developed for Anythink, the CCLL team drew on existing measures of connected learning developed by the Connected Learning Research Network and available on the Network’s research tools website (https://researchtools.dmlhub.net/).

Talkback Boards

Multnomah’s talkback boards focused on reasons why youth came to the makerspace, and how they used the space, including what tools they

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2: ROCKWOOD’S DESIRED OUTCOMES</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interest Discovery and Curiosity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skill Development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of the Space</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
used. Some questions on the talkback boards were designed for youth to give feedback on whether they wanted to go deeper into what they learned that day or explore something different.

The talkback board shown in Example 3 addressed whether participants discovered new interests or deepened existing ones through program activities. It also featured two prompts designed to assess whether the youth connected the program activities to work they might want to do. Based on youth responses, it appears that a number of participants discovered a new interest or talent.

Example 4 elicited the reasons why youth either stuck with or moved away from an activity. The first and last prompts addressed whether youth sought out new things to do because they were bored, or if they just wanted to try something different. The middle two prompts were concerned with whether the participants who kept doing the same thing were happy with the activity or simply weren’t aware of other options. One of the striking patterns from this set of boards was that youth often did “the same thing” rather than trying something new. This suggests an opportunity for programming to allow youth to deepen interests they’ve found, rather than expand programming into new areas. However, a number of the youth also reported sticking with what they were doing because they couldn’t figure out how to engage with something else. This may indicate that with some additional support, participants might branch out more into other activities.

The talkback board in Example 5 evaluated aspects of skill development, particularly related to 21st century skills like prototyping and problem-solving. As evidenced by the talkback board, many youth came up with new ideas for projects in the makerspace that would address a problem, and a few used the makerspace to design something to help their community. One connected learning outcome that libraries are often interested in is civic engagement. Youth responses here suggest that it may be useful for the program to investigate how their activities can further support youth in addressing issues within their communities.

In addition to the talkback boards shown in the previous examples, the makerspace staff created others that helped them make changes to their workshops and camps. These talkback boards asked participants about: the

Talkback Boards Examples 3 & 4
tools they needed the most help with; youths’ plans for the future; and what they wanted out of an experience in the makerspace. These prompts and questions helped the staff confirm that their programs aligned with youths’ interests.

Of their experience using talkback boards, Rockwood Library staff members said:

“We are using the talkback boards to gauge community interests. They are also a great way to find out if the teens are feeling confident with the tools and the space and feel comfortable with the staff.”

“I really do like the talkback boards. They are an engaging way to get teen input. It also creates a moment of reflection that might be lost otherwise.”

**What We Learned About the Practical Implementation of These Tools**

Based on the experiences of our library partners, we have several recommendations for those seeking to adapt these evaluation tools in their libraries. Generally, when creating an evaluation plan, consider when you’ll look at the data and what you will do with the data. It’s important to be realistic about your capacity, and how much staff can take on. These plans also help to develop buy-in from staff, and show that these are useful tools that measure things that the institution needs to see. If staff are going to be asked to take time out to participate in evaluation, it is important for all involved to understand its purpose, and feel like their goals are reflected.

**Talkback Boards**

Evaluation plans should identify a clear and practical set of outcomes that correlate with a range of behaviors patrons might do. (For examples of how to accomplish this, watch video 2 in our *Evaluating Your Connected Learning Programs and Spaces* video series.) Decisions should also be made about whether to collect “sticky-dot” data or open-ended responses, based on staff’s capacity for analyzing this data. Open-ended responses can take more time to log and analyze. However, if your goal is to get feedback for internal improvement, these can still be useful, even if you don’t plan on fully analyzing the data.

To make data organization and tracking easier, talkback boards should have a template with the start date, end date, location of board in library, and the questions youth are responding to, as well as a corresponding Excel sheet or other space for digital collection. Photos of talkback boards can serve as a backup digital record, and can be useful to show other library staff and stakeholders. 3M’s Post-It Notes app, which allows you to scan and organize multiple Post-it notes at once, is also helpful for organizing open-ended responses on sticky notes.

**Staff Surveys**

You should plan to build in time for staff members to fill out surveys, and for supervisors to review responses together with staff. The average time spent on The Studio survey was 5–7 minutes. You should also consider who will organize the data, create the prompts, etc., and who on staff has the time, desire, and skill set that would work best for each task.
Affordances and Constraints

The design of the evaluation tools developed by the CCLL team has both affordances and constraints that impact their effectiveness. Their simplicity can help support staff and stakeholders in rapidly making program improvements, based on participant feedback. Youth can quickly interact with talkback boards, which works well in drop-in environments, and invites them to share their perspectives. Surveys also help staff reflect on what is happening in the space day to day, and their interactions with youth.

One challenge encountered with the use of talkback boards is the lack of demographic data to go along with youth responses. This is one of the trade-offs that comes with an evaluation tool that is publicly displayed. There are also issues of privacy and research ethics that may come with tracking individual youth over time. These issues make it difficult to provide evidence of who was engaging with the program and in what ways, which may be relevant to issues of equitable participation. It may be possible to fill some of this information in through staff surveys and reflections, although this could come with its own challenges of library staff making assumptions about how youth identify.

Let’s consider, for example, Rockwood Library makerspace’s interest in whether there was a difference in skill development for regular participants versus those who dropped in occasionally. If it was found that students who participated regularly had better outcomes, they may want to ask questions related to whether registration-based programming was more accessible to some youth than others, and if there were any barriers to regular participation for youth related to their race, class, gender identity, or sexual orientation. It might also be relevant to question whether there was a pattern of certain youth “leveling up” more than others. Identifying patterns and asking questions like this can help libraries understand the potential sources of inequitable access and adjust their programs for more equitable engagement.

However, a lack of trackable demographic data may make discerning patterns, and understanding their causes, more challenging.

Ways to Move Forward

Despite the challenges encountered with a lack of linked youth participation and demographic data, there are several ways that these evaluation tools may be easily expanded to further address aspects of equity, diversity, and inclusion in connected learning spaces and programs.

Talkback Boards

While the evaluation plans in our featured case studies sought to better understand the needs of the communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>What It’s Asking</th>
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<tr>
<td>Today I used tools, technology, or materials I don’t have access to at home or school. Or I did an activity I can’t do at home or school.</td>
<td>If the library is filling a gap for youth participants, in terms of access to resources or opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I came to the makerspace because my friend told me about it or brought me. Or a teacher told me about it. Or my parent or family member heard about it and brought me. Or a mentor in my community told me about it. Or I found it myself.</td>
<td>How youth are being introduced to the learning program (This can help inform building strategic community partnerships and inclusive recruitment practices.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today I did an activity that I’ve done before or learned about at home or in my community, from a friend, family member, or mentor. Or I learned something or made something that I want to share with a friend or family member.</td>
<td>Whether program activities connect to and/or build on youth’s home and cultural practices Whether youth find what they’re learning and making in the program relevant to other relationships in their life Whether they plan on sharing work they made, and potentially acting as brokers themselves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the libraries served as a key part of developing equitable and inclusive programming, co-designing pieces of an evaluation with youth would further deepen this understanding. Asking youth to help design prompts can promote youth voice in the evaluation of programs that impact them, and may ensure that you are asking questions in ways that are meaningful to them.

The focus of prompts could also be expanded to address issues of access and accessibility. As noted in the Anythink case, this includes looking at how youth were “brokered into” the space. Prompts could also be expanded to address whether a program is effective in inviting connections to youth’s home and cultural practices. Examples for expanding prompts to address issues of access and consider how culturally responsive a program is, can be found in Table 4.

Staff Surveys
Staff reflections could also be further leveraged to evaluate equity, diversity, and inclusion. One way to start is by presenting staff with some broad questions to get them thinking about what issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion need to be addressed at your library and in your community. Examples of both starter questions, and more specific survey prompts are included above in Table 4.

Questions around equity, diversity, and inclusion can be difficult to engage in, as staff members may have varying levels of comfort discussing issues of race, class, sexuality, and gender identification. Their definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion may also be very different. For these reasons, the cultivation of trust and open communication is essential for these types of reflections to be fruitful. Despite the potential for discomfort or tension, it is essential to make time to discuss issues of equity as they relate to your library. This is especially true for libraries where a predominantly white staff is working with youth of color.

Considerations for Acting on Findings
No matter how you expand on or adapt the evaluation tools illustrated in this article, an important consideration when evaluating for equity, diversity, and inclusion is how findings are taken up and acted on. For example, when looking at outcomes related to HOMAGO, as Anythink did, it is important to uphold the importance of all three engagement types. It may be tempting to prioritize or value “geeking out” over “hanging out,” especially when looking at youth engagement through the lens of outcomes. However, it is essential to design your program to both provide a safe space that allows youth to hang out, play, and rest, and support engagement in learning activities that allow for deepening exploration.

Other Connected Learning Resources
Learn more about implementing connected learning programs and principles by visiting the Connected Learning Research Alliance Resource Page: https://clalliance.org/resources/

View the entire video series on connected learning evaluation here, from planning, to implementing, to data analysis: https://clalliance.org/resources/evaluating-your-connected-learning-programs-and-spaces-video-series/

Find connected learning research and evaluation tools at: https://connectedlearning.uci.edu/research-tools/studies/capturing-connected-learning-in-libraries/
**FEATURES**

**References**

1. https://clalliance.org/about-connected-learning/

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**Become a Friend of YALSA**

Friends of YALSA (FOY) was created to ensure excellence in the Association’s traditional programs and services to library workers serving teens and to support growth in new directions as our profession meets the exciting challenges of the 21st century.

Each year, FOY funds are used to support over $16,000 in member scholarships, grants and stipends, including a Spectrum Scholar and Emerging Leader. Funds also support areas such as advocacy, continuous learning, research, planning for the future and teen literacy & young adult literature.

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Visit www.ala.org/yalsa/givetoyalsa/give today.
The YALSA Update

Vote for the 2019 Teens’ Top Ten Now!

Voting for the 2019 Teens’ Top Ten is open now through October 15. Teens aged 12-18 are eligible to vote for their favorite titles from the list of 25 nominees. A list of the nominees can be found at www.ala.org/teen-stopten. The “top ten” titles with the most votes will become the official 2019 Teens’ Top Ten titles and will be announced online October 16.

Symposium Early Bird Registration Ends Sept. 15!

Have you registered for our 2019 YA Services Symposium yet? This year, it takes place November 1-3 in Memphis, TN with the theme: Show Up and Advocate: Supporting Teens in the Face of Adversity. Now through Sept. 15, those who join YALSA/ALA and register for the symposium will be entered for a chance to win registration for our 2020 symposium in Reno, NV. The cost of joining and then registering is equal to the non-YALSA/ALA registration rate. Book your hotel early to ensure availability as they have sold out in previous years. Learn more and view the preliminary schedule at http://www.ala.org/yalsa/yasymposium.

New, Month-Long Teen Celebration, TeenTober, Announced!

YALSA’s new, month-long celebration will be named TeenTober and will take place every October. In June, a naming contest was held for the celebration and teens across the nation voted and selected “TeenTober” as their top choice. The winning name was submitted by Cailey Berkley from Franklin Avenue Library in Des Moines, IA.

TeenTober is a new, nationwide celebration hosted by libraries every October and aims to celebrate teens, promote year-round teen services and the innovative ways teen services help teens learn new skills, and fuel their passions in and outside the library. TeenTober replaces YALSA’s previous Teen Read Week™ and Teen Tech Week™ celebrations, allowing libraries the flexibility to choose what to celebrate (digital literacy, reading, technology, writing, etc) and the length of time for each celebration.

Library staff are encouraged to utilize this new celebration to advocate for and raise awareness of the importance of year-round teen services in libraries. Digital marketing materials will be available for free download soon.

A special thank you goes out to the Teen Read Week/Teen Tech Week Taskforce members: Kelsey Socha (chair), Tegan Beese, Meaghan Darling, Megan Edwards, Shelley Ann Matalerz, Jodi Silverman, and Kimberly Vasquez for all their work on helping create this new celebration.

Need Training for Your Organization?

YALSA’s cohort of Learning Facilitators is ready to bring a YALSA face-to-face institute to your organization. Institutes focus on topics related to YALSA’s Competencies for Library Staff and include Teen Growth and Development, Teen Leadership and Engagement, and Outcomes and Assessment. All Institutes are customized for the needs of the hiring organization. Learn more.

Upcoming Members’ Only Webinars

What’s in a Political Campaign? Media Literacy Techniques for the Campaign Season

Thursday, Sept. 12, 2PM EST

The 20x20 campaign presents an opportunity to help youth gain media literacy skills. In this webinar, participants learn from D.C. Vito (from the LAMP and founder of the 20x20 campaign) how to integrate production and analysis of political video interviews into media literacy activities for and with teens.

YALSA members can access registration details in the weekly association e-newsletter or by signing into their ALA account and visiting the “Members Only” section of the YALSA website.

Submit a YALSA Program for Annual 2020

Got a great session idea? Submit it as a YALSA session for the 2020 ALA Annual Conference, to take place in Chicago, IL, June 25-30, 2020. You must sign into your ALA account in order to access the submission form. Submit content by Sept. 10. Learn more.

Apply for the 2020 ALA Emerging Leaders Program

ALA is now accepting applications for the 2020 class of Emerging Leaders. Learn more.

TeenTober is the new, teen celebration! Keep an eye out for free, downloadable materials!
Leaders (EL). The ALA EL program is a leadership development program which enables newer library workers to participate in problem-solving work groups, network with peers, gain an inside look into ALA structure, and have an opportunity to serve the profession in a leadership capacity. It also helps put participants on the fast track to ALA committee volunteerism, as well as other professional library-related organizations. YALSA sponsors one Emerging Leader annually. Apply by Aug 30.
2019 Teens’ Top Ten Nominees

Encourage teens to read the nominees and vote for their favorites August 15 - October 13!

www.ala.org/yalsa/teenstopten

NEW
Teen Book Finder Database

Find and create lists of great recommended reading from titles from YALSA’s award, book, and media lists!

booklists.yalsa.net
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PRESTON NORTON

WHERE I END

& YOU BEGIN

The universe has a terrible sense of humor.

“[D]eftly explores the fluidity of gender and sexuality without moralizing or oversimplifying.”

—Kirkus Reviews

“[A]n intricate and gorgeously plotted novel.”

—Booklist

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