New Skills for the Academic Library Workforce – A Canadian Experience

Vivian Lewis
McMaster University
New Skills for the Academic Library Workforce:
The Canadian Experience
Our noble past

John Ridington, First University Librarian, University of British Columbia
New Roles for New Times

Concordia University Library
(research data visualization)

Sam-chin Li, University of Toronto
(archiving government web sites)
McMaster’s Carlie Soares

Staff and users at the University of Calgary Taylor Family Library Visualization Studio

Need help with...?
- video post-production
- basic graphics editing & motion graphics
- filming
- storyboarding

Carlie can help you!

Drop-in hours: Tuesdays & Thursday 2-4pm
“CARL provides forum to explore and advance leadership and workforce development so that its member libraries are leaders within their institutions.”

CARL Strategic Directions, May 2016-19

The Strengthening Capacity Committee
CARL’s Approach to Workforce Development

- Required competencies change over time
- Shared responsibility
- Community building
- Peer to peer
- Focus on areas where the association adds value
- Avoid “reinventing the wheel”
In keeping with the 2016 IFLA Guidelines for Continuing Professional Development Principles and Best Practices

The 8Rs Study (2003/4): Anticipating a Massive Wave of Librarian Retirements in Canada
The 8Rs

Retirements
Recruitment
Retention
Remuneration
Repatriation
Rejuvenation

Key researchers: Ernie Ingles, Kathleen De Long, Silvia Sivak, Chuck Humphrey
“A parallel concern with that regarding a human resources shortage is **the perceived need to rejuvenate mid level staff** who, because of downsizing and hierarchical flattening, have not been provided with the opportunity to prepare themselves to fill the roles that will arise from retirements.”

8Rs Identified Changing Roles

88% of libraries said they needed librarians to perform more specialized skills than they had 5 years ago.

89% said they needed librarians to perform more leadership activities.

95% said they have increased use of Information Technology.
8Rs Identified Training Gaps

44% of new librarians felt they were not being given sufficient training.

58% felt they had inadequate **IT skills** to do their jobs.

84% felt they had inadequate **leadership skills**
The wave of retirements proved to be manageable...but interest in workforce issues remained strong.
What are the competencies required to be successful in a 21st century research library?
Why Craft a Competency Statement?

Librarians

- manage their careers
- identify strengths and gaps
- set development goals

Library Directors

- identify skills for new hires
- Create professional development opportunities for staff

The Profession
Seven Key Competencies

1. Professional practice (knowledge of the library, campus, scholarly communication ecosystem)
2. Interpersonal competencies
3. Management and leadership competencies
4. Collection development competencies
5. Information Literacy competencies
6. Research and contributions to the profession
7. Information Technology competencies
Management and Leadership

“As leaders, academic librarians are expected to influence, motivate and challenge their colleagues and their community to advance library and institutional goals and objectives. Management skills are no longer expected only of those librarians in administrative positions. Rather, all librarians should understand the principles of budget planning, and facilities, staff and project management.”

Kathleen De Long, University of Alberta. Expertise in leadership in academic libraries
Research

“CARL Librarians are increasingly called upon, not just to support the research of others on campus, but to be researchers in their own right. More and more, academic librarians produce research and scholarly works of their own to help them gain better knowledge of the profession and to contribute back their own knowledge, skills and experience.”

Amanda Etches, University of Guelph. User Experience and the Mobile Web.
“21st Century CARL librarians are expected to be technologically-savvy. They are expected to thrive in the digital environment. They are expected to be actively engaged in the exploration and implementation of new technologies on their campuses.”

Dale Askey, AUL, Library & Learning Technology (McMaster University)
An intense 1-week workshop to provide practicing librarians an opportunity to immerse themselves in the research process.

Approximately 30 participants /

Run 5 times in the last six years.

Key Players: Selinda Berg (Program Chair), Gwen Ebbett (champion), Kristin Hoffman (Program Chair), Vicki Williamson (champion) and Heidi Jacobs (Program Chair)
Adopting a Peer Model

Building a community of researchers.

5-6 expert researchers selected as peers to teach and mentor the participants

Tony Horava (U. of Ottawa) leading session at the 2017 LRI (London, Ontario)
The Curriculum

Balancing research and practice

Research approaches and processes

Dissemination and professional contributions

**FORMAT:** small group discussions, personal and guided reflections, panels and presentations
Canadian Library Assessment Workshop (The “CLAW”)  

Two-day workshop held in 2013 and 2015...with another run happening in October 2017.  

Purpose: Enhance assessment & evaluation skills. Build a community.  

Strong focus on active learning (workshop model).
The Evolution of CLAW

The 2013 CLAW

Assessment 101, Idea Generation

The 2015 CLAW

Linking metrics to your strategic plan, unbundling the big deal

The 2017 CLAW

Metrics for institutional repositories

Liz Hayden, University of Ottawa, Chair of both the 2013 and 2015 CLAW
Leveraging Existing Leadership Programs

ARL Leadership Fellows

- Helps position library professionals to be “proactive, confident and consequential voices in a dynamic and sophisticated information environment”
- 7-day institute focused on vision, risk taking, creativity, change, power and leadership styles.

- An 18-month executive leadership program to develop future senior-level leaders
- Focus on strategic vision.
- Includes 3 one-week institutes and an opportunity to shadow a sitting director.
Library Management Skills Institutes I and II

A series of two 3-day workshops focused on management style, decision-making techniques, etc.

Supplemented by Offerings from own campus continuing ed divisions

- Most of our campuses have full catalogues of continuing education programs our staff can participate in on general topics like Dealing with Difficult People, Time Management, etc.

LMSI session participants, Waterloo, Ontario.
We Still have a Lot of Work to do

The 8Rs study was replicated in 2013/14 with a focus on Canadian research libraries.

Discovered we still have much work to do.

- Canadian library workers are aging faster than the rest of the population! 30% of librarians are over 55 years of age - versus 20% of the Canadian population)
- More diverse workforce (more visible minorities), but still not enough
- More jobs require specialized skills

Institutions feel they are delivering many opportunities but practicing library workers still see the need for more (especially in management/leadership skills and research skills).
**Competencies:**  Updating the 2010 competencies document

**Management / Leadership:**  Compiling existing resources. Identifying new areas where CARL can bring value (without duplicating)

**Diversity:**  Alberta, Concordia and Saskatchewan have diversity initiatives with library schools. Could this be done collaboratively across Canada?

**Research Data Management:**  More training opportunities coming
What is happening in your country? In your organization?

Could you use any of the Canadian experiences back home?
Questions for Us?