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Core Competencies for 21st Century CARL Librarians (CARL Competencies) Survey Results: unpublished

Jennifer Soutter, December 12, 2016.

Introduction

The survey was implemented to discover whether the Canadian Association of research Libraries CARL Competencies statement was being used, and how. Unfortunately, the CARL-only responses represented around 6% of the total projected population, too small a data set to be used to expand results to the population as a whole. This also made the data unreliable for determining if relationships existed between individuals' positions within the library and how each used the competencies. Thus the results of this survey leave us with many unanswered questions with respect to use of the statement.

The majority of respondents chose not to use the CARL statement irrespective of whether their library was a member of CARL. It did confirm that the CARL Competencies statement was being used, both willingly and at the urging of library administrators: very few library respondents were being encouraged by library administration to use the CARL Competencies. Even a few non-CARL librarians proactively chose to use them. Few respondents also indicated the statement is being recommended by some library administrations in a formative and/or prescriptive manner. The fact they have been recommended for use in a prescriptive manner is disturbing based on the neoliberal ideology embedded within the CARL Competencies statement (Soutter).

Response Rate

A few of the surveys had no responses to any of the questions and were removed from the data set. If a specific question in the survey had no response the survey was included in that data set. Overall, 93.5% of the surveys were navigated through to the end page while 7.5% of the surveys were not completed or finished through to the end page. Overall, the response rate based on the calculations to determine the target population, is just under 6% for all respondents but just over 6% for CARL respondents. Using the DeLong and Sorensen number (pers. comm.) for CARL member librarians, even without the non-CARL figures, results in an even poorer response rate. The survey is attached to the end of this document for reference.

Profile of Respondents' Libraries

Of those who responded to questions about their library, 72.5% indicated their libraries were CARL members, 54.5% indicated their library was an ARL member and 53.25% were members of both associations. For those that identified the FTE of their university 18.42% worked at universities having between 5001-15,000 FTE, 21.05% each for the categories between 15,001-25,000 FTE and 25,001-34,999 FTE, and 25.97% from universities with over 35,000 FTE.

The majority of the respondents that indicated their libraries were situated at universities with under 15,000 FTE also indicated they were neither CARL nor ARL members. With the 15,001 to 25,000 FTE category a shift occurred with a majority of the libraries now members of CARL but still not of ARL. Over 25,000, almost all libraries are both CARL and ARL members. A Chi-

square test was run on whether your university was a member of CARL (Q1) and ARL (Q2) resulted in $P=0.000$ with a level of significance of $P<0.05$. Chi-square tests performed to discover the dependency or the relationship between CARL membership and a librarian's university FTE was very significant at $P=0.000$ with the same result for ARL membership, $P=0.000$. Thus there is a dependency between library membership in each and in both of these associations and the size of the university. The larger the university the more likely the membership exists, a not unsurprising result.

Profile of Librarian Respondents

Looking at FTE and each librarian's association membership, the smallest category represents 7.25% of the total respondents with multiple memberships, increasing up to 27.54% of the total number of respondents with multiple association memberships in the largest FTE category. When considering the number of respondents with multiple memberships (Table 1) it is safe to say these academic librarians belong to many associations and those with higher university FTEs tend to belong to more associations.

Table 1

Category	% of Responses with Multiple Associations
At or under 5000	62.5
Between 5001 and 15,000	57.14
Between 15,001 and 25,000	78.57
Between 25,001 and 34,999	76.92
At or over 35,000	95

A Pearson Chi-Square test was performed to identify any relationship between library membership in CARL and whether a librarian had read the CARL competencies statement. Sixty per cent (60%) of those whose libraries were not members of CARL had read the CARL competency statement while 63% with library memberships had also read the statement. The result, $P=0.815$ indicated there was no relationship between whether your library was a member of CARL and whether you, as a librarian, read the statement.

As for any relationship between CARL membership and whether your library administration encouraged use of the competencies, 95% of those whose libraries were not members of CARL stated their library administration did not encourage or recommend use of the competency statement while 77.4% of the members of CARL also reported they were not encouraged or not had the statement recommended to them for use. The Chi-Square result of $P=0.079$ show no significant relationship within the 95 percentile. Regardless of whether your library is a member of CARL or not, it seems that more library administrations than not are perhaps silent on the use of the CARL competencies statement.

It should be noted that university libraries may have developed their own set of competencies using CARL competencies as basis (DeLong and Sorensen pers. comm.) or even independent of that statement and if true, would impact the results negatively. There may also be a use of the

CARL Competencies or modified CARL Competencies by administrators that is not explicitly identified as such to the librarians, for example in evaluations of performance, the development of job descriptions or when hiring new librarians.

The Chi-Square test showed no relationship ($P=0.131$) between membership in CARL and whether a librarian chose to use the CARL competency statement. The majority of respondents chose not to use the CARL statement irrespective of whether their library was a member of CARL. 59.6% of respondents were members of CARL but chose not to use the competencies statement. For those libraries not a member of CARL and the librarians also said no, this represented 78.9% of that specific population.

Once again, the majority of the survey respondents chose not to use any competency statements irrespective of their membership in CARL with 68.4% of those not a member of CARL not using any competency statements at all, and 58.8% of those a member of CARL also said no to using other competency statements.

Respondents could choose one professional affiliation, more than one, or leave the choices empty, since this author neglected to offer the option of “none” for which professional associations you belong to. Thus 71.43% were members of a provincial association, 44.29% belonged to ALA, 34.29% CLA, 22.86% CAPAL, and 34.29% indicated the “Other” option. It is worth noting that 55.71% belonged to a both a provincial association and at least one national and/or international association.

As you may recall, one of the intentions of this research was to discover whether there were any differences in use of the CARL Competencies and whether these might be related to librarian’s positions in their respective institutions. It was not possible to analyze the data resulting from the questions regarding librarians’ status (Q5-Q11) especially the level of their current position (Q7), in conjunction with questions regarding their approaches/attitudes to the CARL competencies (Q12-23), since the response rate was quite minimal for the latter questions. The librarian status questions asked: when did you get your Master’s degree in LIS (Q5), where (Q6), the job title of their current position (Q8), the primary area of their job (Q9), how long they have been in this career (Q10) and how long they have worked at their current university (Q11).

For Canadian academic librarians, 92% of these respondents have a Canadian ALA-accredited library degree and 8% American (Q6). For those who identified a Masters or equivalent graduation year (Q5) the majority were in the After 2006 (32.43%) category, then Between 1990-1999 (29.73%) and Between 2000-2006 (27.03%), Between 1980-1989 (10.8%). There were no respondents in the Before 1970 or the Between 1970-79 categories.

Overall, the largest category of response to those who indicated level of position (Q7) belonged to Non-Management professional librarians at 54.66% with the next largest category being Middle Management at 21.33%. Broken out into graduation categories, for those who got their degree After 2006 the largest response (66.7%) are at the level of Non-Management, unsurprisingly. For the Between 1980-1989 category, 37.5% are in Middle Management with reporting number very small for the other categories. The Between 1990-1999 category shows 54.5% are Non-management with Senior Administrator the next highest category at 18.2%.

Between 200-2006 50% are Non-Management with 30% indicating Middle Management. The Chi-Square ($P=0.267$) indicated there was no dependency relationship between when you graduated (Q5) and your current level of position (Q7). This is not a surprise. After all it is impossible for all who graduated to move up the ranks as there are fewer positions open at the higher levels.

The largest group of respondents identified their title (Q8) as Librarian at 73.33%, with Head or Department Head the second largest response at 14.66%. The Chi-Square looking for a relationship between when respondents got their Masters degree or equivalent (Q5) and their Job title (Q8) showed the variables were independent ($P=0.121$). The category of those who graduated After 2006 consists of 95.8% of respondents with the title Librarian. For Between 1980-1989 50% of respondents identified as Librarian, also Between 1990-1999 at 72.7% of respondents, and Between 2000-2006 at 70%.

The majority of respondents describing the primary area of their job (Q9) were working within Public Services (including reference, circulation/reserve, instruction, liaison, learning commons, and support activities) at 48% with the rest pretty evenly distributed through the rest of the categories including Other. Two-thirds of the respondents who identified themselves as receiving their degrees (Q5) After 2006 were Non-Management Librarians working in Public Services. There are a few Middle Management and Supervisor level positions also in the mix. Their length of time in career (Q10) showed the majority of respondents had worked 1 to 3 years or 4 to 5 years at the time of the survey. Most had been in their current library 1 to 3 years (Q11).

Half the respondents in the Between 2000 to 2006 category (Q5) have a very similar profile but with the inclusion of Senior Administrator level librarians. The majority of these respondents have been in their career 11 to 15 years but length at current library (Q11) is quite variable with six of the eight options available indicated, with 6 to 10 years and 11 to 15 years the more commonly chosen options.

For people who graduated (Q5) Between 1990 and 1999 (29.73% of responses), the number of identified Senior Administrator level positions increased again (Q7) but the larger number of respondents still held the title of Librarian (Q8). Public Services remained the largest grouping of responses for primary area of work (Q9) but in total represented less than the other areas combined. This group also reflected the greatest variability in length of time in their library career (Q10) with respondents in seven of the eight categories with More than 25 years the only excluded category, and a slim majority for the grouping of 6 to 10 years.

The 1980 to 1989 category (Q5) represented the fewest responses overall and any interpretation of this data is suspect, though More than 25 years in career (10) was, unsurprisingly, more common a response here than in any other category. Also of interest was almost every respondent indicated ARL membership as opposed to any other category.

Looking at the complete set of respondents to Q10, 24.32% of respondents had been in their career between 4 to 5 years with between 11 and 15 years the next most common category at 21.62%. For length of time worked at current library, 24% had been there between 6 to 10 years, and 22.66% between 1 and 3 years.

Librarians and the CARL Competencies

The findings of this research showed very few Canadian academic librarians were being encouraged to use the CARL Competencies. A few other librarians proactively chose to use them. Unfortunately the minimal number of responses (Q14-15, 18-19, 23) regarding how they used them made the data unreliable for expanding to the larger academic librarian population in Canada, or for determining if relationships existed between your position within the library and how you used the competencies.

Questions in this part of the survey were divided into whether you had read the survey or not (Q12), questions on whether your librarian administration was recommending or encouraging use of the CARL Competencies statement and how (Q13-15), whether you chose to use the statement and how (Q16-19), and regardless of your use of the CARL Competencies statement, whether you chose to use any other competency statements and how you used them (Q20-23).

Question 12 asked how many of the respondents had read the CARL competencies and 62.16% indicated they had read them. Of these, 45.95% of the academic librarians had read the CARL competencies (Q12) but were not encouraged to use it by their library administration (Q13) and 16.32% had both read the statement and were encouraged to use it by their library administration. A Chi-Square test was performed to discover whether there was a relationship between when respondents graduated (Q5) and whether they had read the CARL Competencies statement (Q12), assuming length of career might have an impact on what was being read. The findings were unreliable for lack of data. Also did a Chi-Square test on when respondents graduated (Q5) and whether their library administration encourages use of competencies in their workplace (Q13) with the same result: unreliable for lack of data.

There were few responses to what part of the CARL Competencies statement their respective library administrations recommended using (Q14). The responses indicated some used the competency sections of the statement as is and some selectively from within the sections. As to whether they were used in the way indicated by the statement itself (Q15), and in a formative versus prescriptive manner, very few responses were received and they tended to indicate formative use though some were recorded as prescriptive. This latter question (Q15) would need to be tested with a larger response set than that available. The fact that the CARL Competencies have been recommended for use in a prescriptive manner is disturbing based on neoliberal ideology embedded within the CARL Competencies statement (Soutter).

There were more respondents to the question of whether they chose to use the CARL Competencies regardless of their library administration's stance (Q16) and they answered more fully than those who were encouraged to use it by their library administration. 64.79% did not choose to use the CARL competencies statement with the largest group within these indicating for their reason that they were unaware of the statement. But 35.21% of the respondents chose to use the statement, a larger percentage than those who used the CARL Competencies statement on their library administration's recommendation. When asked how (Q19), the top three answers of respondents who chose to use the CARL Competencies statement formatively were: to identify gaps and strengths in their personal competencies, and to set meaningful professional development goals. A Chi-Square test was run on when respondents graduated (Q5) and those

who chose to use the CARL competency statement (Q16) but it showed there was no relationship (P=0.220) between the graduation date and any personal choice in use of the CARL statement.

Those who said no, they did not choose to use the CARL Competencies statement were then asked why. Of these, 62.34% left comments including very few people who had actually responded yes. Of those commenting, 23.38% indicated they were unaware of the CARL Competencies statement. Other comments included the statement was dated, contrary to academic freedom, they forgot, the statement was nebulous, unrealistic, they preferred to focus on ethics or other competency statements, were interested in more critical sources, and the presence of collective agreements.

Only 38.57% of respondents chose to use any competencies statements (Q20). The top two statements mentioned were the ALA Core Competences of Librarianship, then Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. The top responses were to use these to set professional development goals and to identify gaps in professional development goals. A Chi-Square test was run on when respondents graduated (Q5) and those who chose to use any competencies statement (Q20). Unfortunately the result was unreliable for lack of data. For those who were asked why they didn't use any competency statements some responded, and I paraphrase: too generalized, are "unrealistic wishlists", are bureaucratic and time could be spent better elsewhere, are written by senior managers with no consulting of other librarians, what about the role of collective agreements, they don't respond to my needs, too busy doing my job, only useful when managing, recruiting or teaching, and there are none relevant to the area of work (one would be engaged in).

Works Cited

DeLong, Kathleen, and Marianne Sorensen. Personal Communication. 2 May 2015.

Soutter, Jennifer. "The Core Competencies for 21st CARL (Canadian Association of Research Libraries) Librarians: through a neoliberal lens. *Journal of Radical Librarianship* 2 (2016): 35-67.

Survey Questions

A. About your Library

Answers to these questions will help determine whether the status and/or size of the library has an impact on the use of competencies or competency statements.

1. *Is your Library a member of CARL?*

- Yes
- No

2. *Is your Library a member of ARL?*

- Yes
- No

3. *What is the FTE (full-time equivalent) of your university?*

- At or under 5000

- Between 5001 and 15,000
- Between 15,001 and 25,000
- Between 25,001 and 34,999
- At or over 35,000

B. About You

Answers to these questions will help determine, for example, whether your time in the profession and/or your position within the university library has an impact on your use of competencies or competency statements.

4. Which Professional Associations do you belong to?

- Canadian Library Association (CLA)
- American Library Association (ALA)
- Special Libraries. Association (SLA)
- Canadian Association for Information Science (CAIS)
- Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians (CAPAL)
- Any Canadian provincial association
- Other, please specify... _____

5. When did you get your Master's degree in Library and Information Studies (or its historical equivalent)?

- Before 1970
- Between 1970 and 1979
- Between 1980 and 1989
- Between 1990 and 1999
- Between 2000 and 2006
- After 2006

6. Where did you receive your Master's degree in LIS (Library and Information Science) or its historical equivalent?

- From an ALA-accredited Canadian library school
- From an ALA-accredited American library school
- From the historical equivalent to an ALA-accredited library school (e.g. Bachelor of Library Science)
- From a library school outside North America

7. What level is your current position?

- Non-Management
- Supervisor (supervise staff but are not a department head)
- Middle Management (e.g. branch head, department head)
- Senior Administrator (e.g. head librarian, chief librarian, director or deputy/assistant head, chief, director, associate university librarian)

8. Which one of the following job titles best describes your current library position?

- Librarian
- Head or Department Head
- Associate University Librarian or Associate Dean
- University Librarian or Dean of the Library/ies or Chief Information Officer

9. Which of the following best describes the primary area of your job?

- Public services (including reference, circulation/reserve, instruction, liaison, learning commons, and support activities)
- Technical services (including cataloguing/metadata, acquisitions, and support activities)
- Collections (including acquisitions, management and preservation of collections in all formats, including special collections)
- Information Technology (IT/ICT) (including digital and web services)
- Management (responsible for budgets and personnel, overseeing operations, and instituting policies and accountability measures)
- Other, please specify... _____

10. How long have you worked in this library career?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- 4 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- 16 to 20 years
- 21 to 25 years
- More than 25 years

11. How long have you worked at your current university library?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- 4 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- 16 to 20 years
- 21 to 25 years
- More than 25 years

C. The CARL Competencies and You

Competencies are the reframing of work by deconstructing duties or positions/jobs and rephrasing their content as components, most commonly as knowledge, skills and attitudes. Competency statements or guidelines include these competencies and are written to describe these specific roles or jobs such as reference librarian, data librarian and academic librarian, or aspects or parts of librarian roles on such duties as cataloguing, reference, data services, etc., all with an eye to defining success.

12. Have you read the CARL competencies?

Follow this link if you wish to view the CARL Competencies statement

- Yes
- No

13. Does your library administration [Senior Administrator(s)] encourage, in any way, use of the CARL competencies in your workplace?

- Yes
- No

14. What part of the CARL competencies statement does your library administration [Senior Administrator(s)] reference/recommend you use in your workplace?

Please check all that apply:

	The sections noted below	Selectively from within the sections below
Foundational Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interpersonal Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership and Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collection Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research and Contributing to the Profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information Technology Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. The CARL competencies statement lists ways in which librarians are to use the competencies statement. How does your library administration [Senior Administrator(s)] recommend you use the CARL competencies?

	Formative	Prescriptive
All reasons listed below	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manage your career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set meaningful professional development goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Align your goals with the mission of your respective organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify your strengths in your personal competencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify gaps in your personal competencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To inform your portfolio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a checklist of desirable competencies when hiring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create checklist of desirable competencies when identifying training and development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To recruit new talent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To reassess the role of librarian within the academy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To market the profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other reasons, please specify...		
<input type="text"/>		

16. Regardless of whether your library administration [Senior Administrator(s)] recommends the CARL competencies, do you as an academic librarian CHOOSE to use the CARL competencies in your work life?

- Yes
- No

17. If you answered NO, what are your reasons, if any, for choosing to not use the CARL competencies statement?

18. What part of the CARL competencies statement do you CHOOSE to use in your work life?

Please check all that apply:

	The sections noted below	Selectively from within the sections below
--	--------------------------	--

- Foundational Knowledge
- Interpersonal Skills
- Leadership and Management
- Collection Development
- Information Literacy
- Research and Contributing to the Profession
- Information Technology Skills

19. Please indicate below what part of the CARL competencies statement do you CHOOSE to use in your work life?

	Formative	Prescriptive
All reasons listed below	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manage your career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set meaningful professional development goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Align your goals with the mission of your respective organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify your strengths in your personal competencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify gaps in your personal competencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To inform your portfolio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a checklist of desirable competencies when hiring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create checklist of desirable competencies when identifying training and development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To recruit new talent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To reassess the role of librarian within the academy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To market the profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other reasons, please specify:		
<input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>		

D. Your Use of Other Competency Statements

20. Do you, as a librarian, choose to use any competency statements?

- Yes
- No

21. If NO, what are your reasons, if any, for not using any competencies statement?

22. Please indicate other competency statements you actively reference in your work life. Some examples are listed below.

- ALA Core Competences of Librarianship
- Competencies for Information Professionals of the 21st Century (SLA)
- ARLIS/NA Core Competences for Art Information Professionals
- Map, GIS and Cataloguing/Metadata Librarian Core Competencies
- Core Competencies for Electronic Resources Librarians
- Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education
- Information Literacy Competency Standards for Students (HEQCO)
- Other, please specify... _____

23. Please indicate below any relevant reasons for choosing to use these statements:

	Formative	Prescriptive
All reasons listed below	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manage your career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set meaningful professional development goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Align your goals with the mission of your respective organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify your strengths in your personal competencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify gaps in your personal competencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To inform your portfolio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a checklist of desirable competencies when hiring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create checklist of desirable competencies when identifying training and development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To recruit new talent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To reassess the role of librarian within the academy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To market the profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other reasons, please specify...		
<input type="text"/>		

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.