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Library Immersion Program for Graduate  
Students in the Humanities and Social Sciences

WVU Libraries

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2020

## WVUL 2020 Graduate Student Library Immersion Assessment Summary & Findings

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## WVU 2020 Graduate Student Library Immersion Assessment Summary & Findings

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Corresponding Workbook: [2020 IMMERSION SURVEY ANALYSIS\\_FINAL\\_JMV.xlsx](#)

This report summarizes the assessment findings from the 2020 Graduate Student Library Immersion Program held at the Downtown Campus Library from Monday, January 6, 2020 to Wednesday, January 8, 2020. The Immersion Program Schedule and other supporting documents can be located in the Research Repository at WVU (<https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/grad-immersion/>).

### Student Participation Summary

A call for applications was announced on November 6, 2019. In response to this call, the Immersion Planning Committee received 37 applications from students across the University, including Creative Arts, Chambers, Davis, Eberly, Education & Human Services, and Reed Colleges. The Committee selected 15 applicants, of which 13 completed the program.

Participant Demographics:

- Eight PhD students, including Communication Studies (1), English (2), History (1), Learning Sciences & Human Development (1), Life Span Development (2), and Sociology (1)
- Five Master-level students, including Communication Studies (1), Design & Merchandising (1), Education Psychology (1), History (1), and Professional Writing (1)

### Assessment Methods

Program assessment involved a multi-pronged approach. It included a pre-program survey, daily start-stop-continue activities, an immediate post-program survey, and a 3-month follow-up survey.

Pre-Program Survey – built in Qualtrics and distributed on December 20, 2019. Question categories span teaching, learning, and research support at WVU; experience with and usage of WVU Libraries, including instruction, physical space, and electronic resources; and self-reported research ability.

Daily “Stop, Start, Keep” Exercises – conducted face-to-face at the start of Day 2 and Day 3. To collect qualitative program feedback, students logged comments on post-it notes for each of the previous day’s sessions, assigning them one of these categories:

- Reject: what should be completely re-worked or eliminated
- Revise: what was useful but needed modification
- Accept: what worked well and should be continued as is

Following the independent brainstorming, students were given the opportunity to discuss their feedback in a group setting. To encourage candid feedback, session leaders were not present. The assessment facilitator was not a presenter.

Immediate Post-Program Survey - built in Qualtrics and distributed face-to-face on January 8 (the final day of the program). Question categories included program satisfaction, self-reported research ability, comfort level with research, future likelihood to consult librarians, and recommendations for future Immersion Programs.

Follow-up Post-Program Survey – built in Qualtrics and distributed on April 16 (three months after Program) via email.<sup>1</sup> Question categories included: use of research platforms/ tool sand participation in library services/ programs.

## **Assessment Findings**

### *Overall Satisfaction*

Overall, students were satisfied with the Immersion Program with a breakdown of satisfaction as follows:

- 92% indicated that the program was “worthwhile” overall
- 92% indicated that the speakers/ presenters were “engaging”
- 84% indicated that the content was “appropriate and informative”
- 53% indicated that the length of the program was “just right”

Findings from the “Stop, Start, Keep” exercises and Post-Program surveys emphasize the following themes:

- Humanities-centric
  - o Multiple sessions were Humanities-focused. While Social Science and professional-track students generally found these sessions interesting, they indicated that the content was not useful / applicable to their discipline.
- Instructional Handouts
  - o Participants want physical handouts and/ or a single webpage that contains all files (at the point of instruction, not after the fact).
- Interactive
  - o Participants indicated that they would like sessions to be more hands-on, interactive, etc.
- Length of Sessions/ Programs
  - o Comments on session and program length varied widely. Comments ranged from: “condensing the program to 2 days” to “longer immersion program spread out over the course of the week with shorter sessions on each day” to limiting each day to “6 hours” or “ending at 3PM.” Overall, comments indicated that the days were too long.

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<sup>1</sup> Original assessment plan called for a face-to-face focus group on March 25. This event was cancelled due to the closing of the University in response to COVID-19.

## Research Ability

In both pre and post-program surveys, participants were asked to rate their ability to carry out eight research tasks, each aligned to one or more program sessions. Using a competency proficiency scale (Not Applicable = 0; Novice = 1; Intermediate = 2; Advanced = 3; and Expert = 4), the aggregate results are as follows:

Table 1. Pre & Post Research Abilities (Average Proficiency Level)

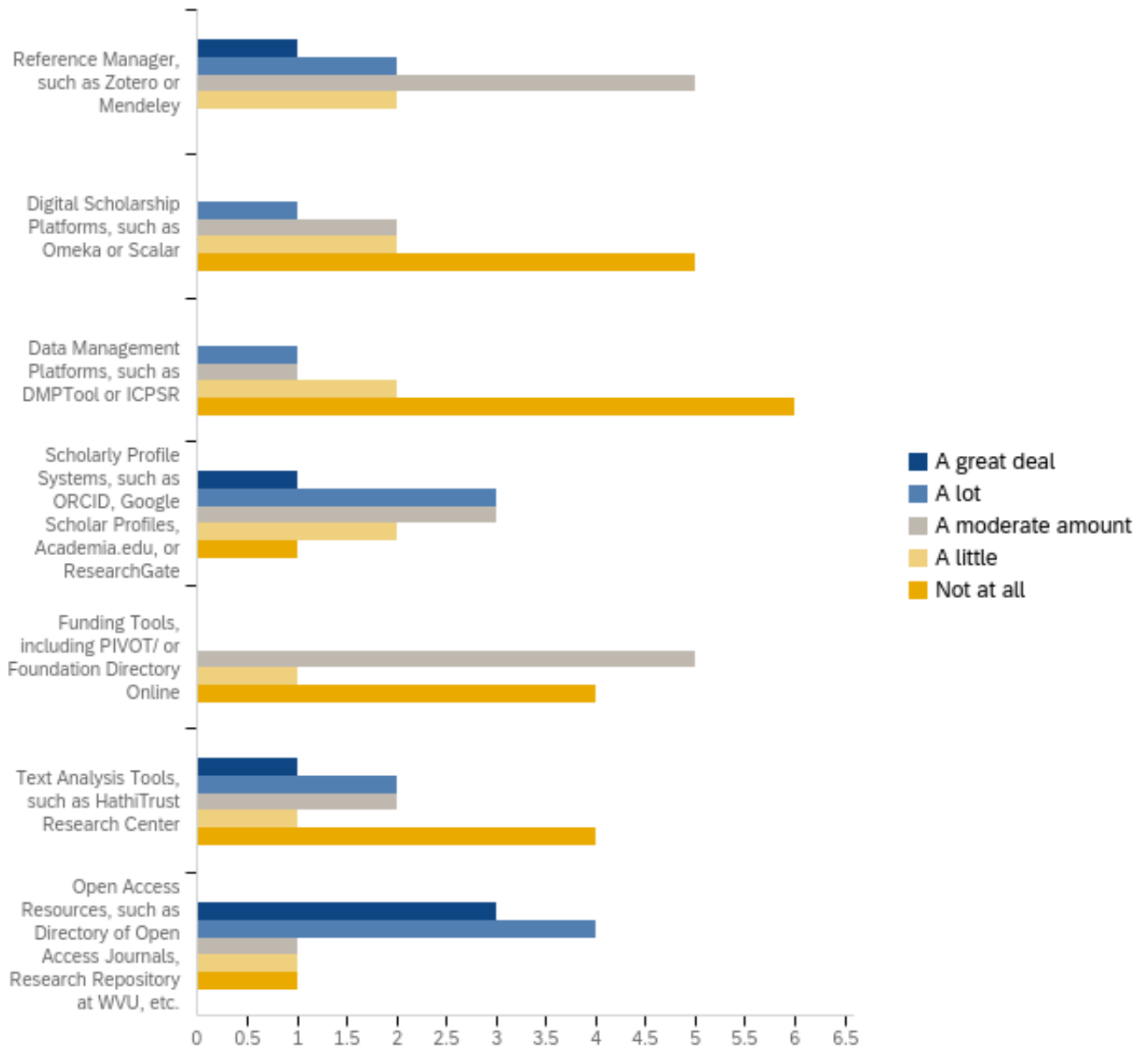
| Research Competency   | Pre-Program Average | Post-Program Average | Degree of Change |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| leverage tools that allow you to share your research openly and track the impact of your work               | Novice              | Intermediate         | 1.25             |
| use citation management software  | Novice              | Intermediate         | 1.15             |
| store, back-up, and organize the files related to your research (i.e. manuscript, data sets, code, etc.)    | Novice              | Intermediate         | 0.92             |
| use advanced search features and techniques in discipline-specific databases                                | Novice              | Intermediate         | 1.00             |
| carry out a comprehensive literature search for a research topic/ question in your discipline               | Novice              | Advanced             | 1.23             |
| locate primary source and archival materials in your discipline   | Intermediate        | Intermediate         | 0.25             |
| use the WVU Libraries webpage and search engine to locate desired sources                                   | Intermediate        | Advanced             | 1.00             |
| organize yourself, including your ability to manage your time effectively in researching and writing papers | Intermediate        | Intermediate         | 0.46             |

- Research Competencies with an average degree of change  $\geq 1$  (noted in blue), highlight where the Immersion Program had the *greatest impact* on student learning. A degree of change of  $\geq 1$  suggests that students improved one full level (or more) in the given research area. These areas include:
  - o Research Impact & Scholarly Profile Systems
  - o Literature Review
  - o Citation Management Software
  - o Discipline-specific Databases & Advanced Search Techniques
  - o WVU Libraries Webpage & Search Engines
- Post-Program competencies with an average score of novice or intermediate ( $< 3$  and noted in yellow) could warrant additional library programming, Immersion or otherwise. These areas include:
  - o Primary Source and Archival Materials Retrieval
  - o Organization and Time Management in Researching and Writing Papers
  - o Data Management Platforms
  - o Discipline-specific Databases & Advanced Search Techniques
  - o Citation Management Software
  - o Research Impact & Scholarly Profile Systems

### Library Usage & Participation Post-Immersion Program

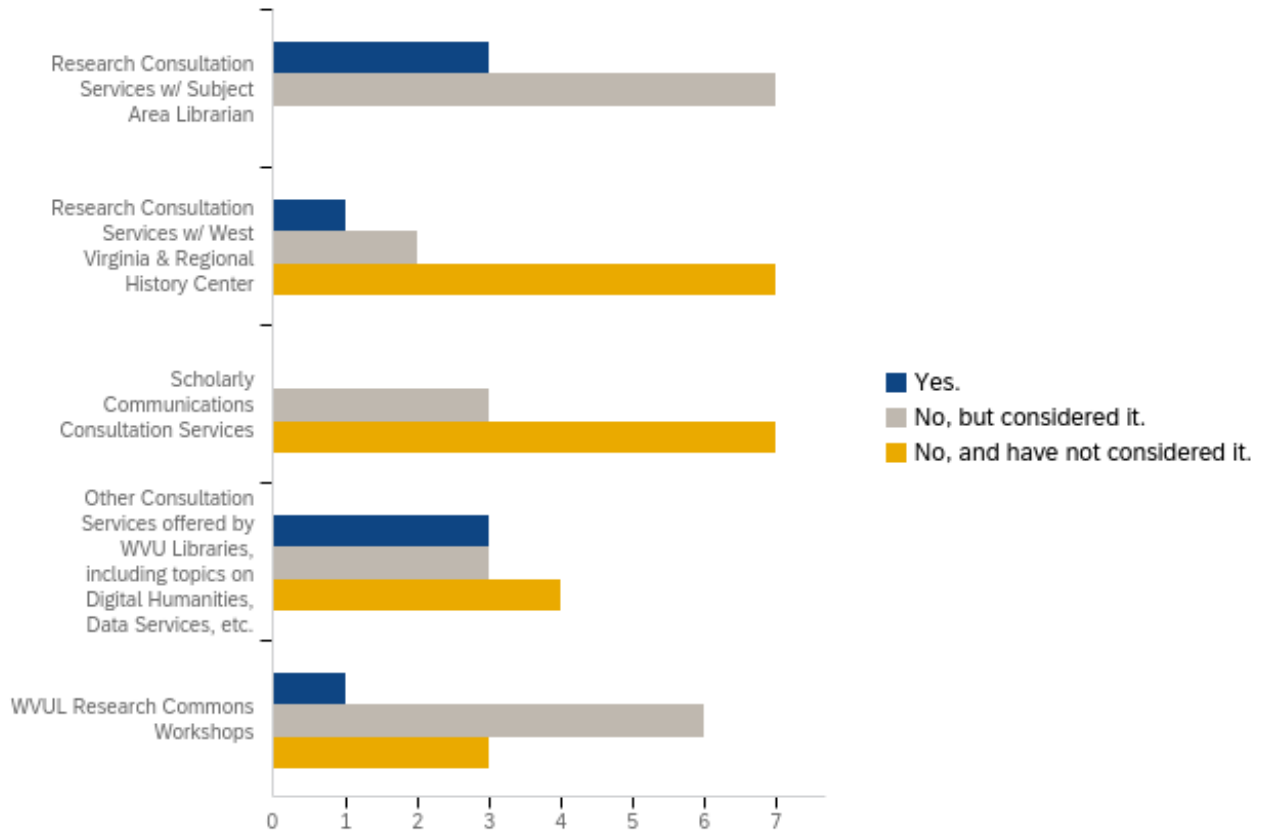
In the final assessment, participants were asked to report their actual usage of research tools, technologies, and platforms as well as their participation in library services/programs between January and early April 2020. Ten students completed the questionnaire. It should be noted that during this time the University transitioned to distance learning in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The breakdown is as follows:

Figure 1. Post-Program Use of Tools, Technologies, & Platforms



- Participants report using Open Access Resources, Reference Managers, and Scholarly Profile Systems the most frequently.
- In a follow-up (open-ended) usage question, eight participants specifically cite using Zotero. Other responses specifically list open access resources and HathiTrust.

Figure 2. Post-Program Library Services/ Programming Participation



- Participants report participating in Research Consultation Services with their subject liaisons and other types of consultation services that include topics on digital humanities, data services, etc.
- To identify what obstacles, if any, prevent students from using or interacting with the technologies, tools, and/ or services, participants commonly reported that they have not “yet” needed them or that they are not applicable to their work.

### Future Programming Recommendations

The 2020-21 Immersion Planning Committee should:

- *align* sessions based on participant-discipline. Given that many non-Humanities participants indicated a disconnect between the curriculum and their academic field, one suggestion is to offer a handful of generic sessions, like citation management, to the full group and then break into discipline-specific tracks, where presenters and content can be more suited to the specific group.
- *share* assessment findings, and in particular, the data from the “Stop, Start, Keep” Exercise with future session leaders.
- *collect* session documents including presentation slides, instructional handouts, etc. and make these available in a central location before the start of the event.
- *encourage* session leaders to create directional handouts and incorporate more hands-on activities in their sessions.
- *re-evaluate* the length of each session and the program overall.
- *consider* external partnerships with units like the Teaching & Learning Commons and/or the Eberly Graduate Writing Studio to offer sessions on teaching, thesis/dissertation writing, etc.