

Measuring the Effectiveness of a Research
Continuing Education Opportunity for Librarians:
Institute for Research Design in Librarianship
(IRDL), 2014–2016

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Outline

- Brief background on the Institute for Research in Librarianship (IRDL)
- Assessment measures
- Selected changes made in IRDL based on assessment results
- Changes for IRDL-2 (2017-2019) based on results from IRDL

Background on IRDL

- Goal: Increase the number of academic librarians with specific research skills in conducting and disseminating the results of research
- Result: Research-based continuing education program for academic librarians
- Components: Nine-day research workshop in the summer, with instructors to provide the research curriculum and one-on-one consultation; pre-Institute activities and ongoing support for the year

Addressing Scholars' Needs

- Collegiality and support in the research process
- Instruction in areas needed to revise proposal and conduct study; but also prepare Scholars for future studies
- Encourage dissemination of findings through publication or presentation
- Instill research confidence in Institute Scholars through instruction and feedback

IRDL Scholars

- More than 250 applicants for approximately 60 spaces – 20 each year – from all over the U.S. and all types of academic libraries
- Applicants submitted a cover letter, research proposal, and letter of support from library dean or director
- Each application evaluated by two Advisory Board members, plus both co-directors of IRDL
- Focus on all forms of diversity, with an emphasis on ethnic and racial diversity; exceeded our goal of 30 percent

Grant Funding

- Funded for three years by IMLS (2013-2016)
- First cohort summer 2014; preliminary results reported at Assessment Conference in fall 2014
- Applied for additional funding, focused on sustainability issues, in 2016
- Funded by IMLS (2016-2019) for IRDL-2
 - Shorter summer workshop
 - Formal mentoring

Research Questions

- Is the curriculum effective in increasing research confidence? (An established predictor of research success)
- Is the balance between classroom instruction and time to write and consult with instructors and others appropriate?
- What else could we do to increase the probability that an IRDL Scholar will complete the proposed research project?

Assessment Measures

- Two areas of interest:
 - Participant outcomes
 - Scholar feedback on the program, including summer workshop and follow-up activities
- Primary outcome: To complete a research project during one calendar year
 - Success defined as completing data collection and analysis
 - Presentation or publication desired
- Long-term goal: To launch librarians on a career that includes high-quality research

Multiple Measures

- Pre- and post-tests of research confidence
- Pre- and post-tests on mastery of workshop content in two of three years
- Ego-centric network study of participants
- Scoring of pre- and post-workshop proposals in two of three years
- Post-workshop survey of participants
- Summative survey of participants at end of IRDL year
- External evaluators in Years 1 and 2

Highlight Three Measures

- Pre- and post-workshop proposals
- Post-workshop survey
 - Sent to all Scholars shortly after the conclusion of the summer workshop
 - Includes questions about all aspects, including curriculum, schedule, food and accommodations
- Summative survey
 - Sent to all Scholars after completion of the IRDL year
 - Focuses on completion of the research project and thoughts upon finishing the year
 - Unexpected benefits/disadvantages of the experience

PRE- AND POST- WORKSHOP PROPOSALS

Scored with a rubric. 4: Exemplary; 3: Accomplished; 2: Developing; 1: Beginning. Items with shadow text: Significant at the .05 level.

Criterion/Section of the Proposal	Pre	Post	t-test	Sig.
Scope: Appropriate design	2.95	3.14	-.810	.428
Significance and purpose	3.29	3.29	0	1
Research question/Hypothesis	2.67	3.19	-2.447	.024
Literature review: Organization	3.19	3.19	0	1
Literature review: Explanation	2.95	3.29	-2.320	.031
Methods: Research design	2.52	3.05	-2.137	.045
Methods: Context, population, and sampling	2.81	3.33	-2.329	.030
Methods: Procedures	2.43	2.95	-2.137	.045
Methods: Instrument	2.05	2.71	-1.625	.120

USE OF POST-WORKSHOP SURVEY RESULTS

EXAMPLE 1/4

Year 1: Create a Twitter account; put proposal in APA format; three readings; complete IRB training; and participate in two surveys.

Beginning Year 2: Asked to submit proposal in APA format.

Year 2 and Year 3: Added readings from the textbooks.

	2014	2015	2016
Number of pre-Institute activities			
There were too few pre-Institute activities.	77%	14%	17%
The amount of required pre-Institute activities was appropriate.	23%	71%	83%
There were too many required pre-Institute activities.	0	14%	0

USE OF POST-WORKSHOP SURVEY RESULTS

EXAMPLE 2/4

Adjusted this element each year. Year 2 increased consultation time from once to twice per day and added our evaluator as a consultant. Year 3 added ourselves as consultants. Asked about this on the 2016 survey; all respondents found this useful.

	2014	2015	2016
Length of time devoted each day for consultation with instructors			
I didn't have enough consultation time.	59%	25%	11%
I had enough consultation time.	41%	50%	83%
I had too much consultation time.	0	25%	6%

	2014	2015	2016
How easy/difficult to be away from work for two weeks			
Very difficult	5%	10%	11%
Difficult	24%	24%	11%
Neutral	24%	24%	22%
Easy	38%	24%	50%
Very easy	10%	19%	6%

Use of Post-Workshop Survey Results

Examples 3 and 4

	2014	2015	2016
Length of workshop			
Nine days was too long	5%	29%	11%
Nine days appropriate	76%	71%	78%
Nine days was too short	19%	0	11%

Summative Survey

- Primary purpose: Determine where Scholars are in completing their proposed research study. Also wanted Scholars feedback on IRDL.
- In retrospect, what were most helpful aspects of the IRDL experience?
- Suggestions for improvement?
- Unintended benefits or disadvantages?

Used comments from 2014 feedback for 2016 summer workshop.

Used 2014 and 2015 results in IMLS proposal.

SUMMATIVE SURVEY EXAMPLE

Scale. 1: Not at all important; 2: A little important; 3: Somewhat important; 4: Very, important; 5: Extremely important.

Importance of various components of IRDL on research activities during past year	2014 (Mean)	2015 (Mean)
Summer workshop content	4.82	4.20
Monthly check-in sessions online	2.76	2.50
Additional communication with other IRDL Scholars	3.38	2.80
Social networking through Facebook and/or Twitter	3.35	2.67
Communication with the IRDL instructors and/or project directors	3.0	2.20

Importance of Comments

- Many opportunities for feedback throughout the two week workshop
- More opportunities for anonymous feedback in surveys
- Post-workshop survey especially helpful for improving the workshop's effectiveness
 - Specific recommendations regarding reading before the workshop
 - Value of hands-on activities – flipped classroom
- Summative survey valuable in planning IRDL-2 and considering sustainability issues

IRDL-2 [1/2]

- Changes based on a variety of inputs
 - Pre- and post-workshop confidence data
 - Scholars' comments
 - Our observations
 - Grant proposal reviewers' comments
- Shortened length of summer workshop to one week away – rather than two
 - Decreasing days of instruction by two
 - Previous Scholars did not recommend this change but will decrease costs and time away from home and work
 - Emphasis on most critical content and on hands-on learning – rely heavily on flipped classroom

IRDL-2 [2/2]

- Rationale for formal mentoring program
 - Cohort I Scholars offered to mentor Cohorts 2 and 3
 - Research shows that mentoring can be powerful success factor among novice researchers
 - More frequently studied outside LIS than within
- Each mentor will work with two Scholars
- Mentors will receive training
- Adding former IRDL Scholars to Advisory Board

Conclusion

- Convinced that IRDL increases research confidence and provides novice researchers with needed knowledge and support for success.
- Ample evidence of IRDL Scholars' research success – well beyond IRDL research project.
- Looking for a sustainable model for a reasonably-priced fee-based experience.
- By documenting the success of IRDL Scholars hope to convince institutions to support their librarians' participation.
- Committed to the development of next generation of academic librarians.

Thanks to our partners and funder...



Questions, comments, suggestions?

- For additional information about IRDL:
 - <http://irdlonline.org>
- Output of IRDL Scholars:
 - <http://irdlonline.org/project-info/irdl-scholar-works-completed/>
- Contact us:
 - Kristine Brancolini (brancoli@lmu.edu)
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