Ideas for Strengthening Research Skills

- *Practicing research questioning strategies:* Students use questions and document the process they use to come up with a final research question (for examples see chapter 3 in *The Craft of Research*, Booth, Colomb and Williams[1]). They can practice questioning using different **organizational frameworks, disciplinary frameworks, historical perspectives, stakeholder perspectives, etc.**

- *Practicing critical reading strategies:* Students can **annotate** course readings and then turn in **summaries** of their annotations. Students can practice **paraphrasing with proper citation** the key ideas, questions, conflicts, themes, etc. found in course readings.

- *Practicing close reading skills:* Students can practice identifying **language patterns, argumentation patterns, logical reasoning patterns, strands, and oppositions** and why they are important.

- *Practicing development of theses statements:* Students can approach a research assignment from three different perspectives-**analytical, expository and argumentative.** This can also be done in student groups of three with each student developing a thesis from a differing perspective. The group members then share their **thesis statements** and discuss how they would proceed with research, analysis and support.

- *Practicing evaluating Internet sources:* Using questions found on Library and Writing Center/Studio websites, or professor generated questions, students are required to justify their choice of electronic citations. **What tests of credibility must each citation pass?**

- *Practicing observation skills and using inductive and deductive reasoning within a classroom model of action research:* Taken from classroom instruction and disciplinary theory, students use field experience to test and record a research question from both reasoning perspectives. Students record observations, interviews and eyewitness statements in a **research journal.** They **reflect on their observations and record their reasoning processes for drawing conclusions.**

- *Practicing pure vs. applied research:* Once conclusions are developed, students develop an action plan for participation in (real or hypothetical)- **program development, policy revision, writing a position paper, volunteer work.**

- *Encouraging pre-planning of a senior thesis or project:* Students can use various field experiences as a catalyst for a larger project. Students develop a working research question **prior to study abroad, internships or community service.**

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[1] Booth, W., Colcomb, G. and Williams, J. (2003) *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.