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 Williams¹). 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.