Key Lessons from Our Experiences Co-Facilitating the RSD CoP:

The 2014-2015 Research Skill Development (RSD) Community of Practice (CoP) has been an incredible learning experience for our participants, and the campus as whole. Engaging CoP participants and key administrators with the Research Skill Development Framework during the summer 2014 RSD Workshop, hosted by John Willison, was critical to getting support and buy-in at all levels. The Summer Kick-Off Workshop also helped us to retool our original CoP plans by getting immediate feedback and input from all CoP members. Ultimately, we learned:

1. Participants each brought their own unique area of research expertise, and were at differing levels of familiarity with working through Institutional Research Boards and conducting Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SOTL Research). Immediately the utility of a “shared language of research” through the RSD Framework facilitated our discussions and collaboration within the CoP.

2. Some CoP participants had difficulty committing to the scope of the RSD and some wanted to serve as champions for the framework and educate others about it. Others were willing to actually conduct research on it.

3. Some CoP members had more difficulty than others conceptualizing how the framework best related to their courses/assignments. This also impacted the pace of the CoP, particularly in fall semester.

4. Having a librarian involved in the CoP was key to our success, as she helped to reinforce how information literacy is a cornerstone for reaching higher levels on the RSD framework. This was especially for several CoP participants who were teaching foundational courses – and thinking through what kinds of support services on campus are available to help students build competencies in information literacy.

5. Thinking through how the RSD ties to the mission/vision of the University (as well as at the college and department levels) was important to help us understand how to communicate about the RSD to important stakeholders.

6. The RSD was especially useful to us because it came from an external expert, and thus was perceived as “neutral territory.” Because no specific department, college or other academic unit was seen as having specific ownership of the RSD framework, it was easier to implement from a political perspective.