As a co-facilitator of the Research Skills Development Framework (RSD) community of practice (CoP), I engaged in a number of projects and activities related to the CoP’s overall goals of raising awareness, understanding, and integration of the RSD framework at UW-Stout.

Specifically, the projects and activities that I was involved with included:

1. Assisting with the planning and evaluation of the initial John Willison workshop that was conducted in July 2014. The purpose of this workshop was to provide a basic overview of the RSD for members of the incoming CoP cohort, as well as other interested members of the campus community. There were 35 participants in the workshop. In order to assess the program’s effectiveness, a Qualtrics survey was sent out to participants at the conclusion of the workshop (see appendix A). 25 participants completed the survey (71% response rate), and the results were overwhelmingly positive. 19 of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “The RSD Workshop met my expectations and personal learning goals.” Additionally, 20 participants responded that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “The RSD workshop helped me examine my views and knowledge about undergraduate student research, and what I could do to provide more opportunities to apply it to student learning.”

2. Assisting with planning and facilitating the RSD CoP’s bi-weekly meetings during the 2014-2015 school year.

3. Assisting with the planning, development, and execution of an RSD workshop for January Professional Development Week.

4. Assisting with the development and implementation of a research project measuring the CoP participants’ perceptions of the RSD framework at three points during the school year. Specifically, we used the Stages of Change framework to evaluate the CoP participants’ perceived levels of understanding the RSD at the beginning, middle and end of the year. I was particularly involved with the development of the IRB documentation for the study and creating the survey instrument in Qualtrics. Additionally, I distributed the surveys to participants. While there was strong participation (7 respondents) on the first (beginning of the year) survey, participation did dwindle to 4 respondents on both the mid- and end-of-year surveys (see Sylvia’s final report). Along with Kit and Sylvia, I am currently in the process of analyzing the data from these surveys in order to understand if there are any key lessons surrounding the process of gaining familiarity (and comfort) with using RSD framework. Additionally, we are intending to highlight any specific challenges that we think
may have potentially constrained CoP participants’ abilities to become more familiar with this tool. (See Sylvia’s final report for a very initial analysis of the data).

5. Serving as a mentor and resource to other CoP participants who do not have the same level of familiarity with IRB processes and/or conducting human subjects research.

6. Conducting a RSD-based project with my SPCOM 100: Fundamentals of Speech course (see appendix B). The goal of this project was to gather baseline data about students’ perceptions of research in a foundational course and to compare those perceptions to my assessments of their research competencies. The project involved multiple components:

   a. First, I administered an online survey that asked my students to assess their familiarity with the processes of conducting research (just in general) as well as their level of comfort with research competencies that are critical to public speaking (e.g., the ability to evaluate source credibility, to analyze information from multiple sources, to communicate what was learned from the research). Moreover, questions in the survey asked students assess their overall level of interest in research, whether they perceived their studies at UW-Stout required them to do research, and whether research was an activity that would be important in their major or field of study. Finally, students provided open-ended responses to questions about what they think research involves, as well as what helps them or has been a barrier to their research skills. What was interesting about the students’ responses was that they rated themselves highly in terms of their perceptions of their research abilities. For instance, 15 of the 20 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements “I am able to frame research questions in this course” and “I can devise procedures on my own in this course to find information relevant to my inquiry.” However, responses were more mixed when students were asked whether research was an activity which influences practices in their major or field of study (only 11 respondents agreed/strongly agreed; 6 were neutral, and two disagreed/strongly disagreed). Results for the statement “the ability to research will be important in my career” were similarly mixed (12 agreed/strongly agreed; 4 were neutral; 3 disagreed). Students defined research primarily as conducting information searches using secondary sources (e.g. “Reading things that others have found” or “Tracking down useful information relevant to a specific topic in order to answer a question or simply learn more). While past experience in search for information was cited as the main way students had developed their research skills to this point in their academic career, they articulated multiple barriers to developing their research skills as well (e.g., “lack of ability;” “Limited resources;” “lack of desire;” “I never really knew how to use a database or the kinds of keywords to use.”)
b. Second, I used an RSD-based assessment tool to compare how students integrated research into two speech assignments in the course. Although I am still analyzing the results of this assessment, the vast majority of students (90%) are at a Level 2 on the RSD framework (see the attached assessment tool).

c. Overall lessons from this project: First, I thought there was a notable disconnect between students’ perceptions of their research competencies and how they sometimes performed on research-based assignments. Second, I was surprised to note their ambivalence surrounding the desire to want to do more research as well as the mixed results on how this applies to their future (both in terms of academic and occupational endeavors). This prompts an important issue for foundational classes (such as SPCOM 100 and ENGL 101): How do we persuade students about the value of the inquiry processes? Strikingly, one of the major barriers to getting students to do more research is drive/motivation – so finding ways to connect WHY research is important to their lives and professions is a key lesson. Moreover, this project demonstrated how important it is to develop a common vocabulary about research/inquiry from the start of a foundational course: Most students conceptualized research as finding facts/secondary sources at this level. This is likely quite different from how universities are typically defining undergraduate research – and demonstrates the need for a scaffolded approach to build students’ understandings of the different kinds of inquiry (as well as how and why they are important).

Overall, I have found my participation in the RSD CoP to be both educational and personally edifying. First, I am grateful for the kinds of connections that I made with other faculty and academic staff as part of this experience. It was enjoyable to engage in deep, philosophical conversations about the processes of inquiry – how we do it, why we do it, how it looks different across our fields, what we want our students to be able to do, and how it is supported at various levels (specifically from a library resources perspective – and I thought this was a particularly valuable perspective for us to have included within the group).

Moreover, I am increasingly motivated to continue including and thinking about how to develop foundational competencies for research in my classes. Students absolutely must understand why it is important to establish credibility (through research) for their claims – and particularly, why this credibility is stronger than personal experience. At the same time, I agree with the group discussion that this kind of skill development cannot stop at the foundational level. It must be reinforced across the curriculum, which is why developing a common vocabulary for talking about research at UW-Stout is so very important.
This research has been reviewed by the UW-Stout IRB as required by the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46.

Consent to Participate In UW-Stout Approved Research

Title: Using the Research Skills Development Framework to Assess Student Learning Outcomes and Information Literacy Objectives in the Basic Public Speaking Course

Investigator: Dr. Anne Kerber, Assistant Professor, Communication Studies

Description: The goal of this study is to evaluate a new approach, the Research Skills Development Framework, for teaching skills related to conducting research, especially information literacy and the incorporation of research into presentations. As part of this study, you are invited to complete a self-assessment on your familiarity with and perceptions of research. You will be receiving invitations to complete the self-assessment both before and after our class discusses research strategies. I hope to learn whether the Research Skills Development Framework makes it easier for you to develop your information gathering and evaluation skills, and how it helps the ways you use research in your speeches. The data will be used to improve the ways research skills are taught in this class. Information that could be used to identify you will be removed after the data is collected. This de-identified and aggregated data will be shared with other instructors to help integrate and assess the use of the Research Skills Development Framework in their own classrooms.

Risks and Benefits: There are no risks or discomforts anticipated as a result of your participation in this study.

Time Commitment and Payment: Participation in the self-assessment will take approximately 5-10 minutes, and the self-assessments may be taken at a time and location of your choosing. There will be no compensation for your participation in the study.

Confidentiality: You will not be asked to provide your name or any identifying details as part of this survey. Additionally, there is no way to identify your individual survey once it has been submitted. Thus, it is highly unlikely that you could be connected directly to your answers.

Right to Withdraw: Your participation in the self-assessment is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate without any adverse consequences to you. The choice to (not) participate will have no bearing on your overall standing in this course. Additionally, you have the right to stop the survey at any time. However, should you choose to participate and later wish to withdraw from the study, there is no way to identify your survey after it has been submitted. Once you submit your response, the data cannot be linked to you and cannot be withdrawn.

IRB Approval: This study has been reviewed and approved by The University of Wisconsin-Stout’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by the federal law and University policies. If you have questions or concerns regarding this study please contact the Researcher or Research Advisor. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the investigator or the IRB Administrator.

Investigator:
Dr. Anne Kerber, 715-232-1238, 209 Tainter Hall, kerbera@uwstout.edu
IRB Administrator:
Sue Foxwell, Director, Research Services
152 Vocational Rehabilitation Bldg.
UW-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751
715-232-2477
foxwells@uwstout.edu

Statement of Consent: By completing the following survey you agree to participate in the project entitled, “Measuring the Effectiveness of the Research Skills Development Framework Community of Practice.”

My general research skills are good.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My general research skills used in this course are good.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I am able to frame research questions in this course.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I can devise procedures on my own in this course to find information relevant to my inquiry.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
I can effectively evaluate the credibility of sources of information in this course.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I can effectively evaluate the credibility of sources of information in this course.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I organize information from multiple sources effectively in this course.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I am able to analyze information effectively in this course.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I can clearly communicate in writing what I understand from my research in this course.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

I can clearly communicate in oral presentations (e.g., speeches) what I understand from my research in this course.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

By researching topics in this course, I am more able to understand it.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

I would like to be more involved in research.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

My studies at UW-Stout require me to do research.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

Research in this course is an activity that has trustworthy outcomes.

Strongly Agree
Research is an activity which influences practices in my major or field of study.

The ability to research will be important to my career.

What do you think research involves?

Up to now, what has helped you to develop your research skills?

Up to now, what has been a barrier to developing your research skills?
# Public Speaking Research Skills Assessment

**Student Number: _______________________________________**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facet of Inquiry</th>
<th><strong>Student Autonomy Level 1</strong></th>
<th><strong>Student Autonomy Level 2</strong></th>
<th><strong>Additional Notes</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facet of Inquiry</strong></td>
<td>Students research at the level of a <strong>closed inquiry</strong> and require a <strong>high degree of structure/guidance</strong></td>
<td>Students research at the level of a <strong>closed inquiry</strong> and require some <strong>structure/guidance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Additional Notes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Students <strong>embark</strong> on inquiry and so determine a need for knowledge/understanding</td>
<td>❑ Thesis and main points are somewhat connected, but lack a clear focus or purpose</td>
<td>❑ Identifies a clear purpose within thesis and main points</td>
<td><strong>Additional Notes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Students <strong>find/generate</strong> needed information/data using appropriate methodology</td>
<td>❑ Supporting materials partially relate to the main ideas/themes for the speech</td>
<td>❑ Supporting materials clearly extend, enhance or clarify main ideas/themes for the speech.</td>
<td>❑ Supporting materials include information from a variety of sources, including scholarly journals and popular media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Students <strong>critically evaluate</strong> information/data and the process to find/generate it</td>
<td>❑ Identifies indicators of source credibility and reliability but does not fully apply them in evaluating information</td>
<td>❑ Identifies several relevant indicators of source credibility and reliability and provides appropriate rationale for usage/inclusion of information</td>
<td><strong>Additional Notes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Students <strong>organise</strong> information collected/generated</td>
<td>❑ Has attempted to use an organizing pattern from the textbook, but supporting information is not fully connected to main ideas, or contains some peripheral or duplicated ideas</td>
<td>❑ Uses an organizing pattern from the textbook and supporting material is included under the appropriate main points.</td>
<td><strong>Additional Notes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Students <strong>synthesise, analyse and apply</strong> new knowledge</td>
<td>❑ Supporting material is included but is separated by sources rather than being integrated to form an argument.</td>
<td>❑ Main points include knowledge claims that integrate ideas/data from different sources</td>
<td><strong>Additional Notes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Students <strong>communicate</strong> knowledge and the processes used to generate it with an awareness of ethical, social and cultural issues</td>
<td>❑ Partial and/or incorrect acknowledgement of sources of information in the student’s speech</td>
<td>❑ Full and correct acknowledgement of sources of all noted information in the student’s speech</td>
<td><strong>Additional Notes</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>