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Evolving Collaboration: Keeping library instruction relevant with Biomedical Engineering Senior Design Students

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Background

- BME 295/296 Senior Design Students
- Full year course involving one semester of research and one semester of creating their product
- Involves product research, patent searching, design, corporate contacts
- 3 – 4 member teams working with outside client



Traditional Approach

- Address class with a one time, 20 minute session
- Asked to explain the the library catalog, databases, patent sites, FDA information, citation styles, etc, etc
- Early in the semester



Not Working!!

- Not at student's point of need
- Lack of retention
- Missing basic searching skills
- Engineering curriculum traditionally does not allow time for library instruction
- Students tuning out message



Changing Approach

- Started with discussion between a colleague and instructor
- Need instruction at point of need
- Individualized sessions
- No “one size fits all” approach



New Plan

- 5 minute introduction in class
- Appointments with 15 project groups outside of class time
- Appointments for class credit
- Received topic and needs ahead of time to tailor sessions
- Sessions lasted 15 – 45 minutes depending on the group



What they needed

- Citation assistance
- Patent finding
- Databases – many were completely unfamiliar with ISI, Compendex, etc.
- Finding full text
- Google assistance
- Formulating searches



Results

- Follow-up questions
- Email correspondence
- Students remembered me and stopped by to chat about projects
- Received notation in acknowledgments for several projects
- Instructors noticed improved research skills



Conclusions

- Not groundbreaking but it worked
- Instructors were pleased and invited back for next session
- Faculty collaboration
- Begins plans for marketing this approach to other junior and senior design courses
- Approach lower level engineering classes to help students earlier in career



Questions?

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More information about BME 295/296:

[http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/bme/undergraduate/
senior-design/](http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/bme/undergraduate/senior-design/)

Biomedical Engineering:

<http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/bme/>