

Are three heads better than one?

Mark Bieraugel

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

Once upon a time...

a group of agribusiness students needed to prepare for a competition in three weeks...

Students needed to

Learn how the competition functions and ways to win

Use a variety of business and agribusiness resources

Present their findings to a panel of experts

*But who can prepare the students?
And how?*

1. Danger, risk, and shrieking eels!

Only 3 weeks to prepare a group of agribusiness students for their competition!

How to dump a load of business research knowledge into the student's brains in three early morning Saturday sessions!

Everybody Oversubscribed!

Students are busy with their studies

Faculty and two librarians busy with instruction and other projects

How can we cram all that stuff into the student's craniums ?

2. Barriers to student success

Student team needed to learn how to do private company research, and industry research

The team also needed to do agriculture research and commodities research

And the team needed to solve a company's problem, supporting their solution with data found during the research phase

The students knew the industry prior to the competition, but they did not know the company or the company's problem before the day of the competition

Can one person prepare the students?

3. Not one head but three heads

1



2



3

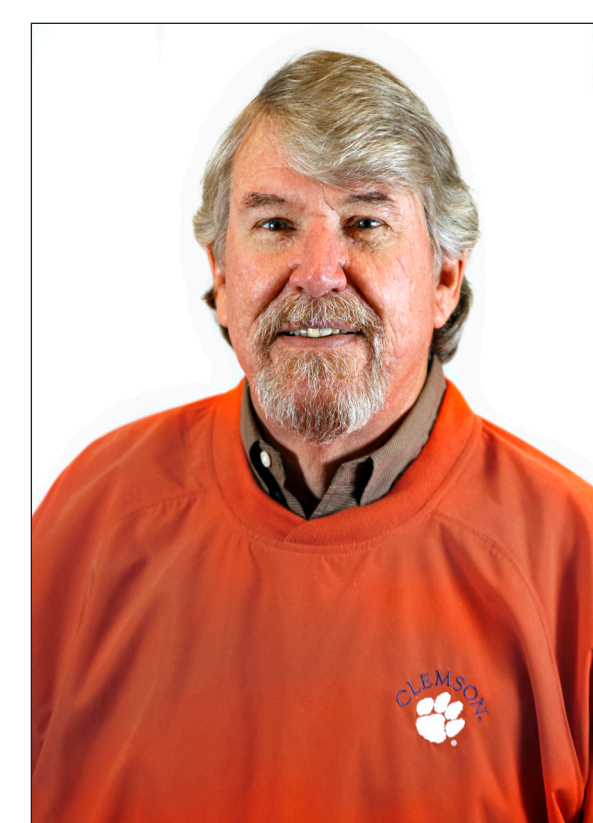


1. Agriculture librarian and LibGuide Queen
2. Agribusiness faculty member, PhD, with deep competition and industry knowledge
3. Business librarian and newbie to academia

4. The three-headed solution



- Created, in real time, customized LibGuide for students to use during the competition
- Taught agribusiness resources, including how to find high quality copyright free images of food products through NAL



- Group training in the ways of the competition, methods, and best practices
- Advice on which resources to use, what data the team should focus on for their presentation



- Created targeted information literacy group training covering the agriculture and business resources
- Wrote up a handout for private company and industry research

5. The invisible three headed dog

During the competition:

The LibGuide is a 'silent' librarian there to guide the students through the research process during the competition. All three collaborators developed the content for the LibGuide.



6. Customized LibGuide

LibGuide includes the following tabs:

Industry
Consumer Demographics
Company Information
Articles
Production Statistics
Regulations

Also includes links to these sites:

MLA Formatting Style Guide
Prezi link
Flickr Creative Commons
Images from the National Agriculture Library
Google Advanced Search

7. Teaching and learning materials

No Tech

Printed handouts for business research

Printed case studies to help students practice their research and presentation skills

Printed metrics for competition scoring

Had students read and study hard copies of industry trade publications including *Dairy Goods* and *Hoard's Dairyman*

Low Tech

Customized LibGuide created specifically to the student's needs for the competition

And they lived happily ever after...

Key Takeaways

Cross campus collaboration critical for the success of this project

3 heads are better than one

Students get more out of each of us when faculty work together

Next Steps

Build on experience for next year's competition

Apply structure to future collaborations

Sets stage for larger scale collaborations across disciplines

Develops working relationships between librarians, cross trains

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Katherine O'Clair and William (Bill) Amspacher for their collaboration on this project, and to Kristen Thorpe for her timely suggestions.

For further information

Please contact mbieraug@calpoly.edu.