Implementation of research/publishing experience in large Biochemistry class at Hunter College.

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Proposal Summary: The main mission of the Chemistry department at Hunter College is to educate and train undergraduates in biochemistry to prepare them for graduate and professional schools. Research is the single most important aspect of student engagement and entrepreneurship in physical sciences. However, the continued increase in the number of biochemistry majors has put significant pressure on faculty making difficult to provide top-notch education. Here we propose to offer students, who don’t have chances to work with faculty on research projects, with opportunities to gain original research experience by augmenting the current laboratory course. The new lab will focus on determination of polymorphisms to study Human Populations and on skills development to report these research advancements. This hands-on experience will give students a more authentic learning experience, teach them about forensic DNA and its applications in real-world situations by using themselves as test-cases, help them understand the research process and learn to communicate scientific information though Wikipedia article editing assignments. This will be achieved by the unique collaborative work of Dr. Kleiman, biochemistry lab coordinator, and Professor Bishop, digital initiatives coordinator. As results of this research experience, students will develop skills that include creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, information literacy, and communication skills.

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