

CHEM313 Survey of Biochemistry and Biotechnology

Letter to CHEM313 students:

Dear Students,

I want to let you know that I plan to rely heavily on teamwork in my CHEM313 section and will, probably, include group oral exams as one of the assessment methods, in addition to more traditional timed computer-based quizzes. Online learning is a very challenging process both for students and instructor. I plan to use teamwork to help you stay motivated, develop good communication skills, and create a fun and hard-working virtual learning community in this time of social isolation. I tried this in Spring 2020 and learned a lot that experience. At the start of the quarter, students were extremely anxious about group oral exams and teamwork. By the end of the quarter most students in the class liked working on teams felt either neutral or favored group oral exams.

Here is a graph from our mid-quarter informal evaluation completed by 32/50 students (we switched to calling oral exam an “interview” to help reduce student anxiety):

Attempts: 32 out of 32

How do you feel about the first "interview"? choose the option that closest matches to how you feel...I know none may capture perfectly, but you can provide more details in the follow up open ended question.



I plan to spend my summer re-tooling for online instruction, so I can provide best possible experience for you, given that in the current situation we cannot meet in person. I recognize that teamwork and oral exams may not be acceptable for everyone, so I wanted to let you know before you register what to expect.

If you tend to feel anxious in social situations, please, consider signing up for this section – weekly practice will likely help you feel more comfortable working in virtual teams and talking to people. Keep in mind that very few jobs involve working in isolation (even now!); development of oral communication, teamwork, and leadership skills will help you get a job and succeed in that job after graduation!

Best wishes,

Anya Goodman, Ph.D.

Professor

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry