

Last UCI TA Evaluations

October 31, 2022

Chemistry Department, Cypress College

“This instructor asks his students to explain concepts during discussion, which helps create conversations about the alternative ways to do the problems and other ways to think about them. However, he expects at least some of his students to know calculus (which is not a prerequisite) before entering the class, which made understanding the chemistry concepts more difficult. Also, he is very strict in grading free-response because he looks for key words. If the concept shows full understanding but is missing a couple of his predetermined key concepts, he will not give the free response full credit, which makes it difficult sometimes to know what he is looking for in an answer.”

“Hi Brian, I really appreciate your humility. In discussion when you said that our midterm scores were not just a reflection of us as students, they are also a reflection of you as a teacher, I really admired that. Thank you for wanting to help us learn and improve. I like that you take the time to answer our questions in discussion. Thank you for patiently re-explaining things when someone doesn't understand.”

“Brian is a really kind TA! He goes out of his way to socialize with everyone despite it being on zoom and tries to get everyone included. He is very patient with us and always asks us if we have any questions.”

“As a teacher, perhaps going a little slower in concepts that are more complex or hard to understand might be helpful.”

“Um, this might sound weird or unreasonable, but I figured I should mention it since this is an anonymous survey. I know that participation during discussion is part of our grade for this class, and I completely understand why. However, I have social anxiety and it’s inexplicably (and honestly ridiculously) difficult for me to volunteer to do homework problems. Like, I literally just sit there and think about volunteering and my hands get cold and sweaty and my heart starts beating really fast/loudly and I completely freeze up. Then eventually, the window of time for volunteers to step up closes and I just sit there regretting the fact that I didn’t/couldn’t volunteer. I really want to contribute and also make sure that I get my participation grade, but I don’t know how to do that on my own terms...

The social anxiety is regarding the act of volunteering, not the act of solving a problem in front of the entire discussion (I know that that's a very irrational line of thinking and that those two things are practically the same, but that's just how it feels). Therefore, I think it would really help me out if you (Brian) called on students more often. There are a couple of students who consistently volunteer every class period, and that's totally great and I think they should be allowed to solve the problems they volunteer for,...

but is it possible for you to limit them to working on one problem per discussion, even if they got that problem wrong and want to redeem themselves? Or maybe you could split up the problems so that one person only has to solve one or two parts, thereby allowing everyone else to have more opportunities to participate? I know that this request must sound excessive and that I should just suck it up and raise my hand or unmute my mic or even type something in the chat, but I'm still working through my social anxiety and I think those accommodations would be really helpful."