Making Your Classroom a Joyful Learning Environment

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As a chemistry teacher

I struggled with engaging my students and sharing with them a joy for chemistry and learning.

What I Used to do…

- Lecture from the front of the classroom
- No engagement, just cover material
  - Evident through poor body language
  - Evident in lack of teacher-student relationship
- I simply covered material and my students tried to survive

Which led to…

- No student wanted to take my class
- My students had trouble learning
  - No engagement
  - No excitement about chemistry
- Chemistry had become WORK!
  - Students were just completing tasks to get by

Has anyone ever felt this way?

No engagement

No excitement about chemistry

ZOOM POLL 1

So, I became frustrated… as did my students

I realized I had to do something different.

- Find solutions to engage my students and make learning fun
  - Different textbook
  - “Think outside the box”
  - Online learning platforms
- This is what I learned on my journey to become a better teacher…

On my journey I…

Talked more with my students

- Smile more = I care about student's' success
- Display positive body language
- Show that I LOVE my work & the course material
- Show that this is not just a job
- LISTENED to THEM

On my journey I…

Attended workshops

- We’re a community of learners; my job to make sure we can all learn together

On my journey I…

Visited with textbook author Dr. George Stanley

- Use group work in class to solve chemistry problems
- Try something different

ZOOM POLL 2

On my journey I…

Completed ACUE Course in Effective Teaching Practices

- Greet students daily
- Online office hours
- Quick replies to student messages

What I do…

- Greet students upon entering classroom/lab room
  - Show my excitement for the class, the subject, & my students
  - Show understanding about lateness
- Learn the students' names
  - Give them validation

What I do…

- Rewards for class engagement
  - Door prizes
  - Gold stars
- Engagement through Extra Credit
  - Come by office & Meet the Professor
  - Campus Student activities (educational events) that I also attend

What I do…

- Teach around classroom
  - Surface Go
- Small group work during class

How I help students engage in chemistry…

- First Day PowerPoint for Instructor & Course Introduction
- First lab class
  - "Deep Dive" into campus & classroom technology
    - Download apps to phone & practice using them
    - Submit practice assignment in the LMS (Learning Management System)
    - Aktiv Chemistry [*previously Chem101*]
    - Labflow
- Students introduce each other
  - What's your favorite fruit?
  - Message via Teams

Title page of First Day PowerPoint "Introduction of Instructor & Course"

Slide introducing instructor which helps students know I am a real person.

Past

Present

Future

Oklahoma

Arkansas

Tennessee

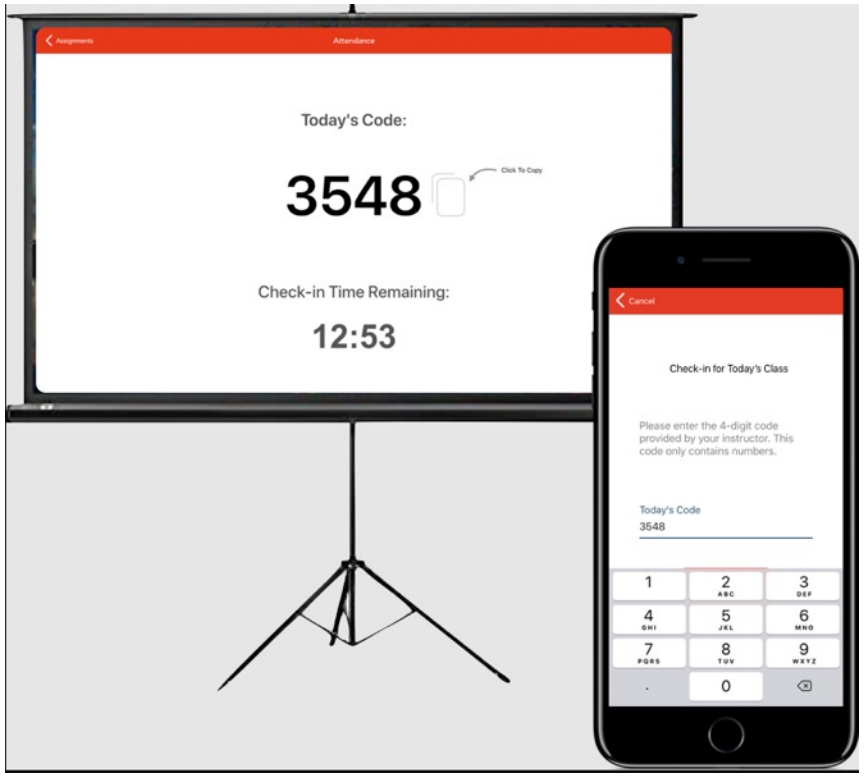
Arkansas

Arkansas (Lyon) College

I use apps such as Chem101…

[*now called Aktiv Chemistry*]

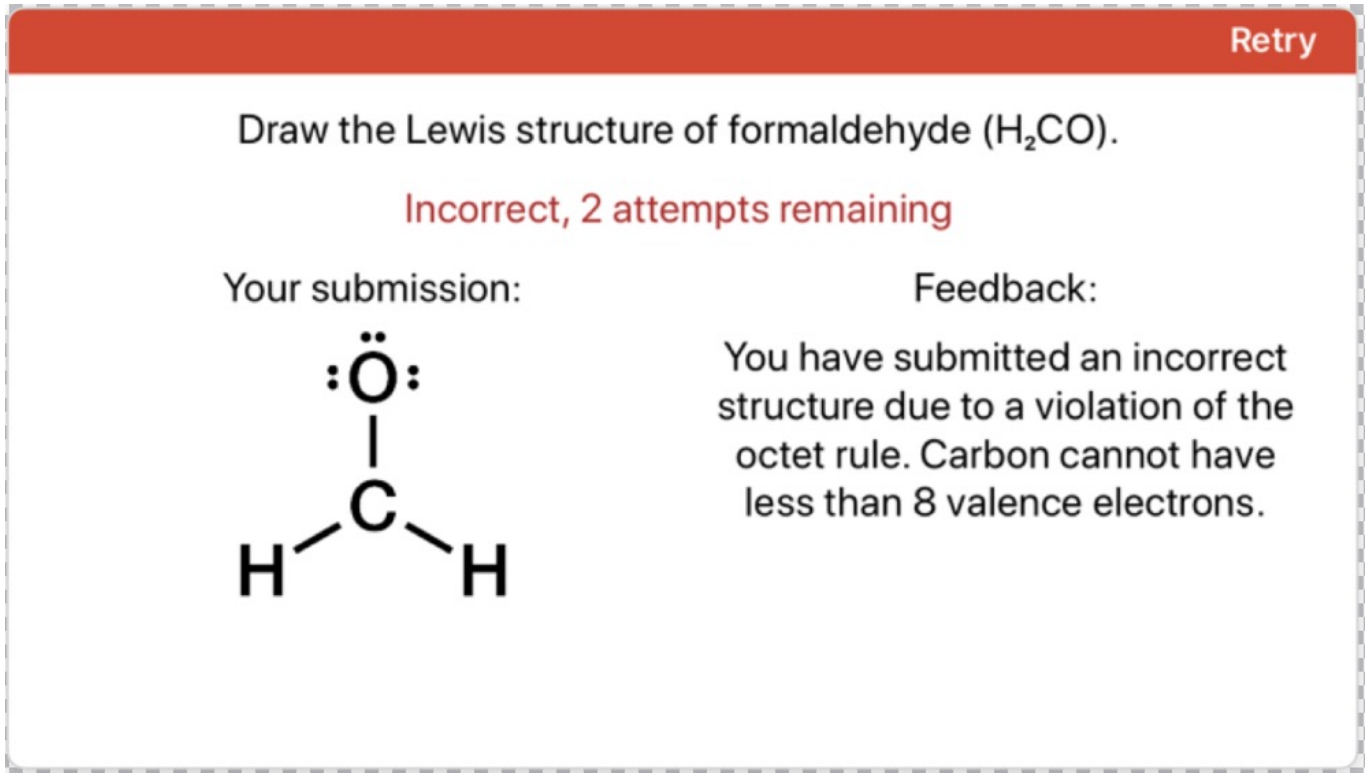
Automatically records attendance which I use to let me know when students might be at risk.



I use apps such as Chem101…

[*now called Aktiv Chemistry*]

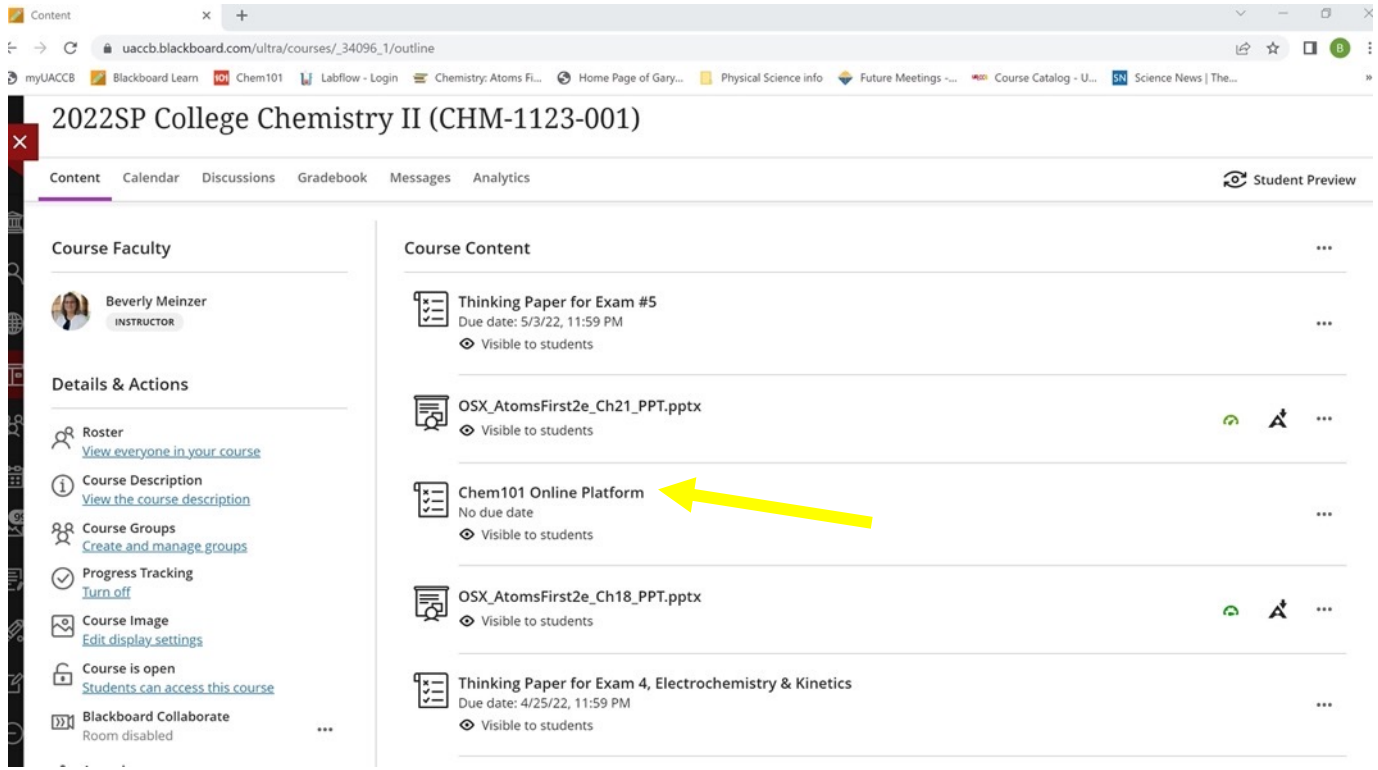
- Provides in class examples with feedback
- Delivers homework with feedback



I use apps such as Chem101…

[*now called Aktiv Chemistry*]

- Delivers exams
- Seamlessly integrates into Blackboard



Content | Chem101 | app.101edu.co

myUACCB | Blackboard Learn | Chem101 | Labflow - Login | Chemistry: Atoms Fi... | Home Page of Gary... | Physical Science info | Future Meetings -... | Course Catalog - U... | Science News | The...

Chem101

ASSIGNMENTS | CLASS | QUESTIONS

Assignments

2022SP College Chemistry II (CHM-1123-001) (Spring 2022)

Download Grades

IN-CLASS | HW | QUIZ | PRACTICE

New Folder | Copy To... | Download Grades | Delete

▶ Uncategorized

New Attendance | New Activity | New Poll

COMPLETED

CODE: 5271

Attendance
March 30, 2022
Time Limit: 15 minutes 0 seconds
Session Length: 1 hour 15 minutes

Edit | Mark All Present | Delete

COMPLETED

CODE: 2430

Attendance
March 28, 2022
Time Limit: 15 minutes 0 seconds
Session Length: 1 hour 15 minutes

Edit | Mark All Present | Delete

COMPLETED

CODE: 8508

Attendance

Edit

Former students

"I miss your class…"

"Would you write a letter of recommendation for me to…"

"All that work with me on my lab reports has really paid off. I and my fellow UACCB alumni were the only students in Organic Chemistry 1 who did not have to rewrite their lab report. Thank you."

"I really got a good foundation at UACCB in your class and in my other science classes."

Current Students

Some of the Online PHS students Q&A after an in-person lab session.

Students say…

"…the excitement from you makes me enjoy learning. I appreciate how you care for your students and their learning. I love how welcoming you are at the beginning of class!"

"…helped me engage in chemistry because you make it sound super exciting!…"

"…I love that you walk around the room and ask questions, and explain the questions that are asked. It really helps me understand things and I get excited to learn!"

Students say…

"Do you teach Biology?"

"…I like that you walk around class and ask us questions…I believe that you posting class examples also help."

"You getting excited about chemistry helps me get excited as well. I really enjoy being in your class and learning."

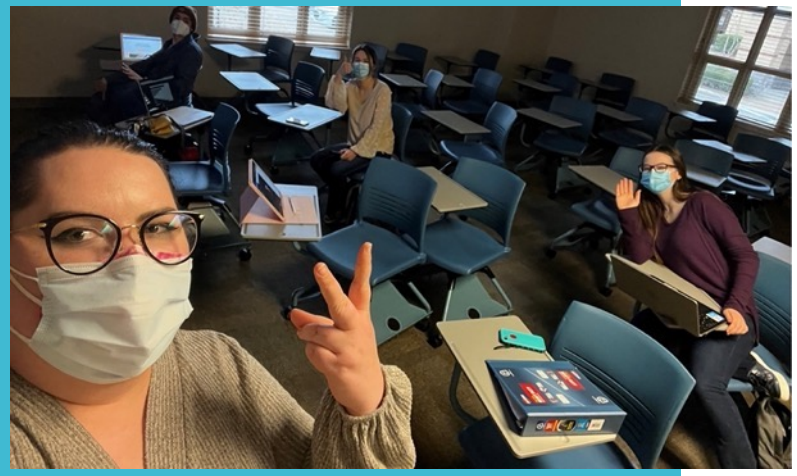
Students say…

"…I really like Labflow and Chem 101 as well, the extra practice questions we have access to make it so much easier to learn…having it online and having us download the app on our phones in class while you helped was super important…I probably would not have done that and now anytime I have free time I can just click on and go through a few problems or check due dates without taking any time at all."

"… You are always available to help…"

Life with students…

Help session

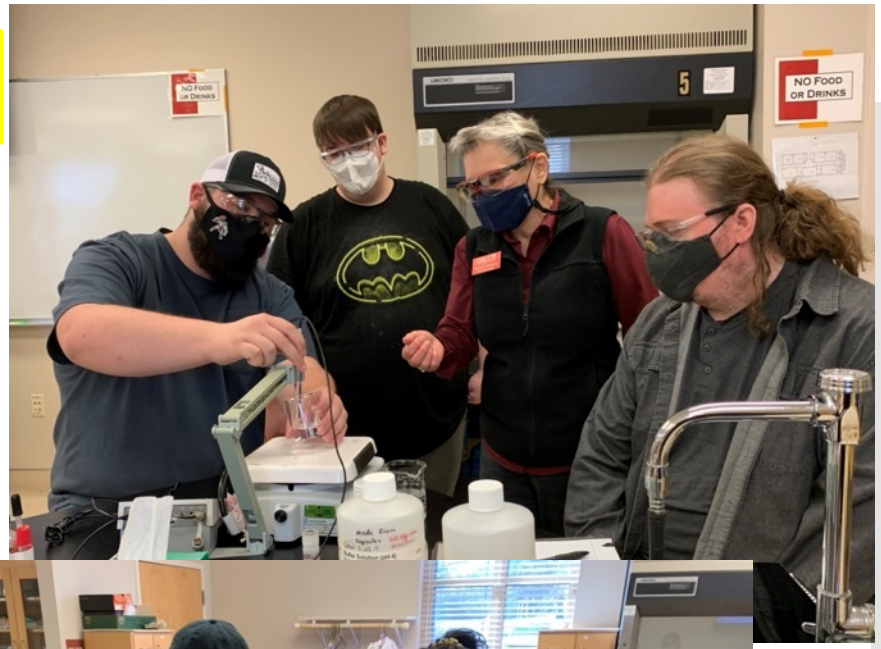


Remote Learning

ME

Lecture Hall

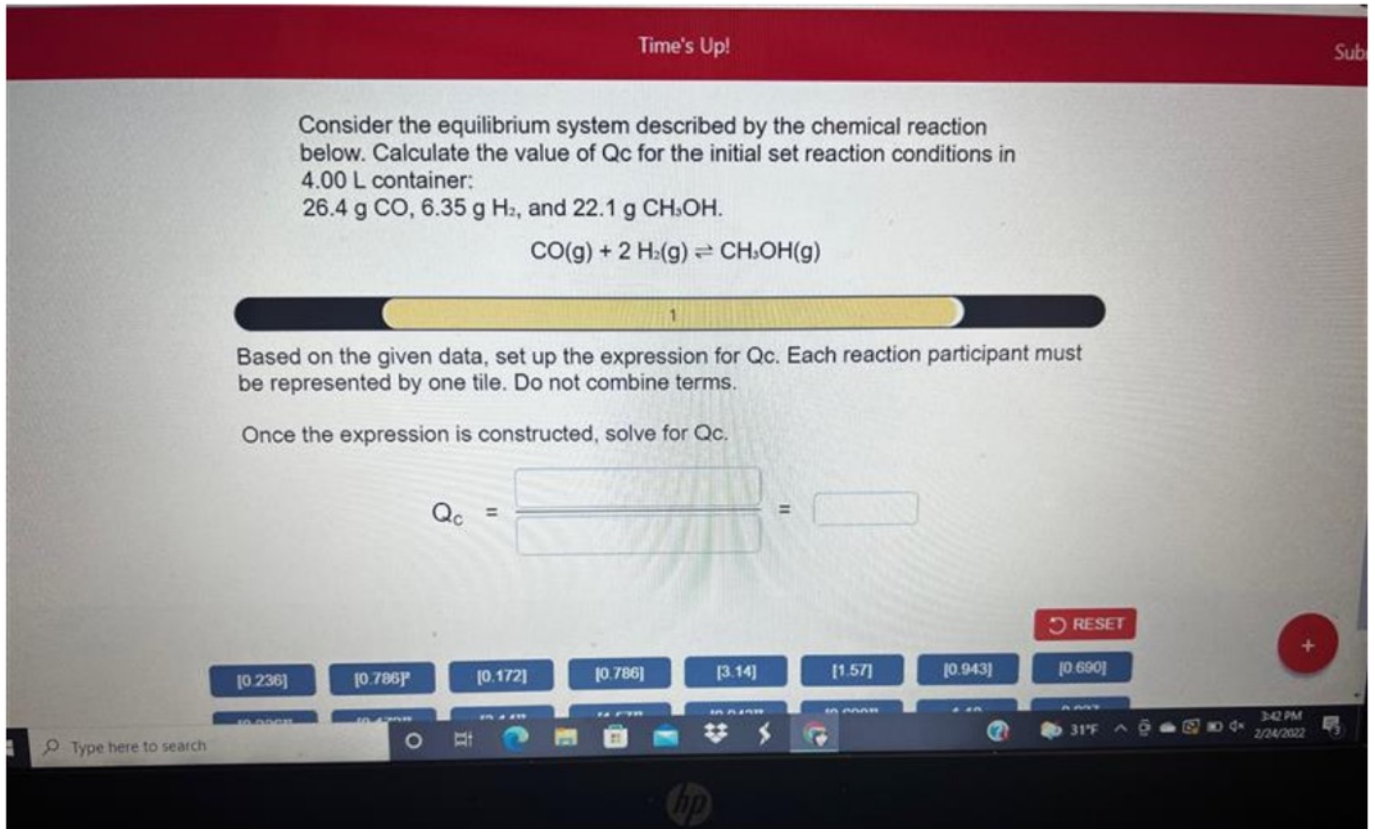
Life with students…



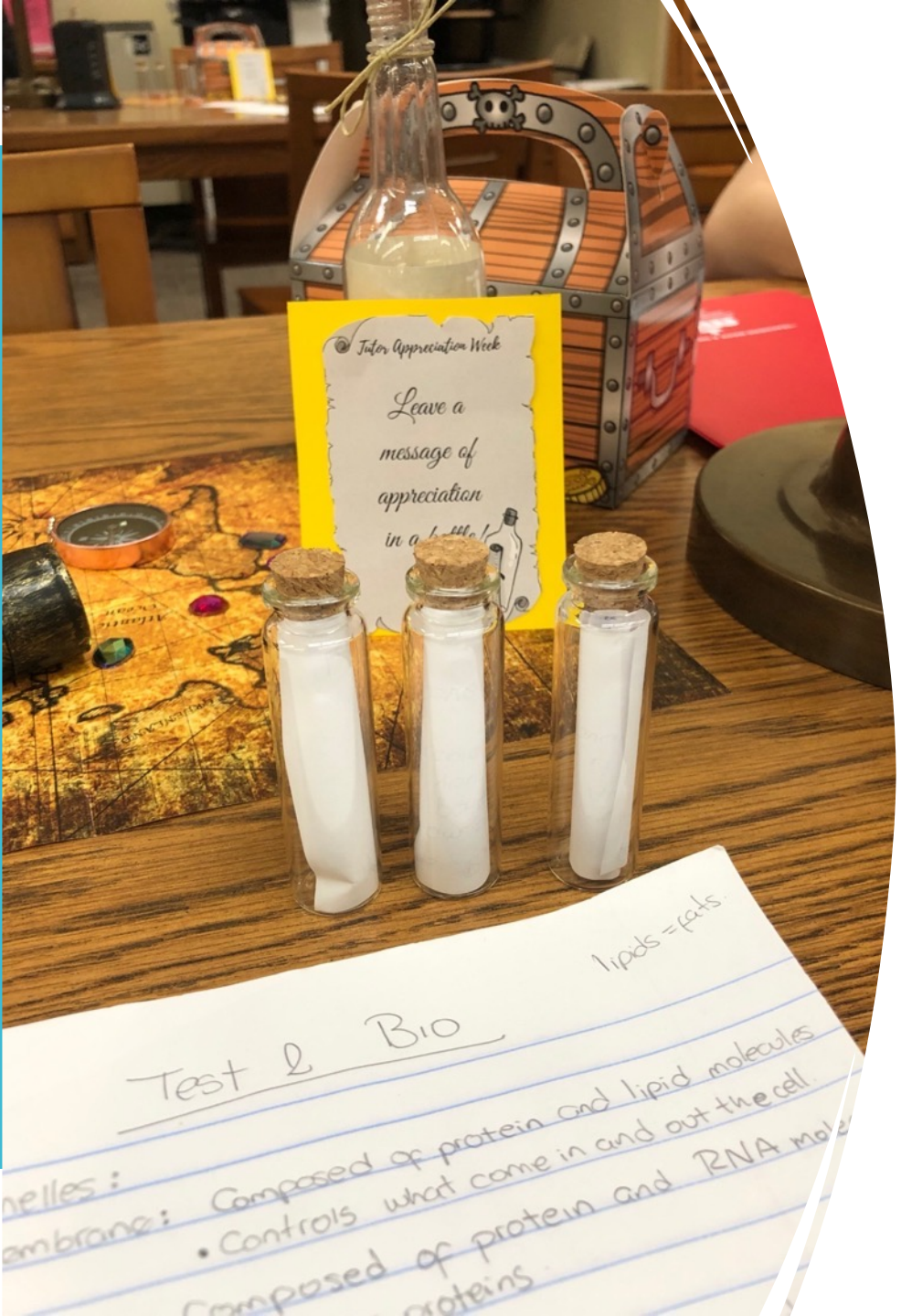
Chem lecture

Chem Lab

Working via Teams



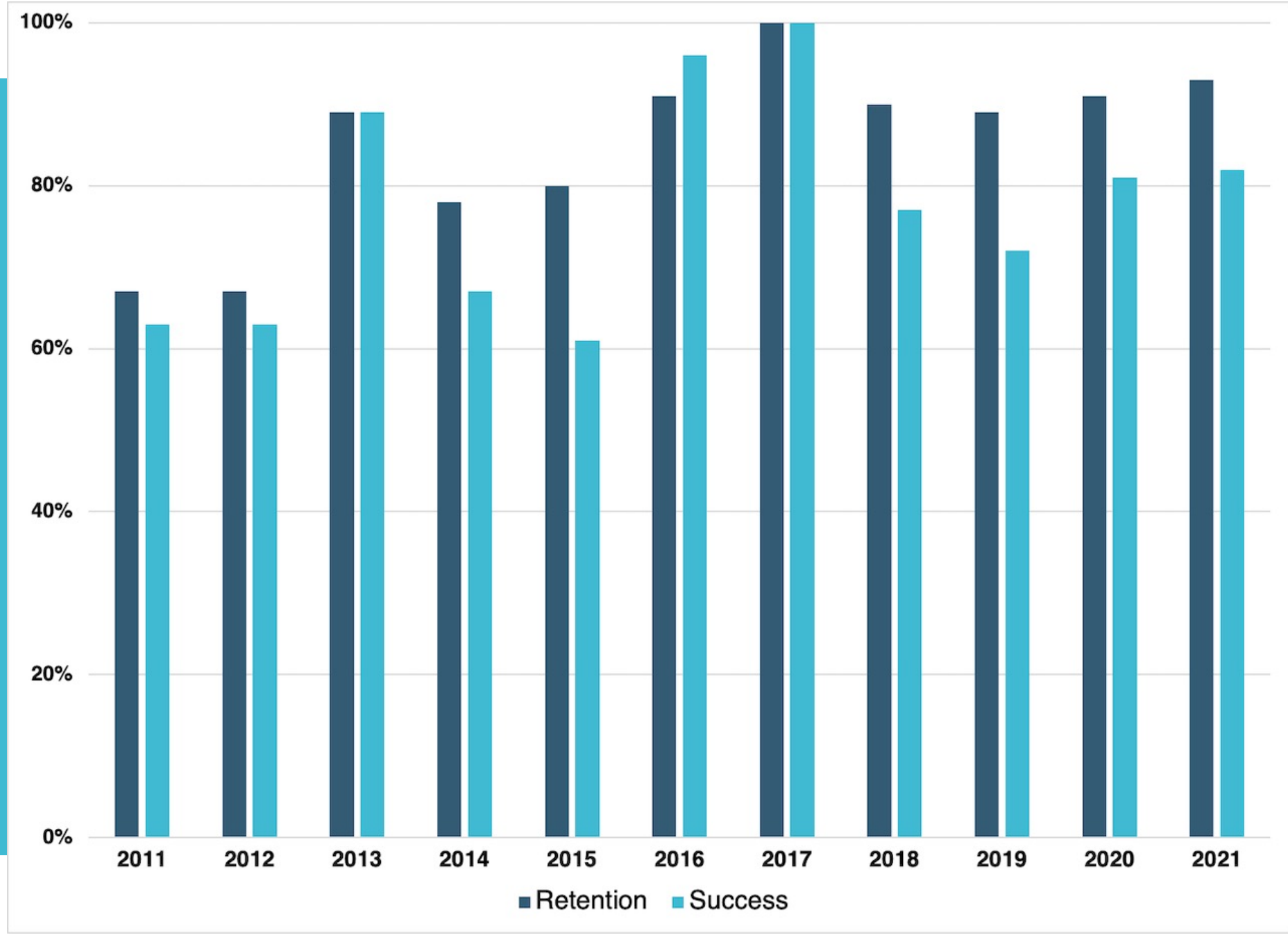
Student portion of Aktiv Chemistry [Chem101] screen



- Students earn extra credit if they visit the Student Success Center (free tutoring) and report to me which tutor they worked with.

- “I worked in the Student Success Center with [name removed] and in TRIO with a student tutor named [name removed] on our second lab, the one that I had so much trouble with.”

All this change in my teaching has created better retention and success among my students



What's next?

- Keep sharing my joy of chemistry & learning with my students
- Keep improving my ability to use apps such as Chem101 [*now called Aktiv Chemistry*] to engage my students
- Keep developing relationships with my students which begins by learning their names
- Keep learning how to be a better teacher
  - Attend seminars
  - Take the Quality Matters (QM) course
  - Observe other great teachers
- Share what I have learned with others