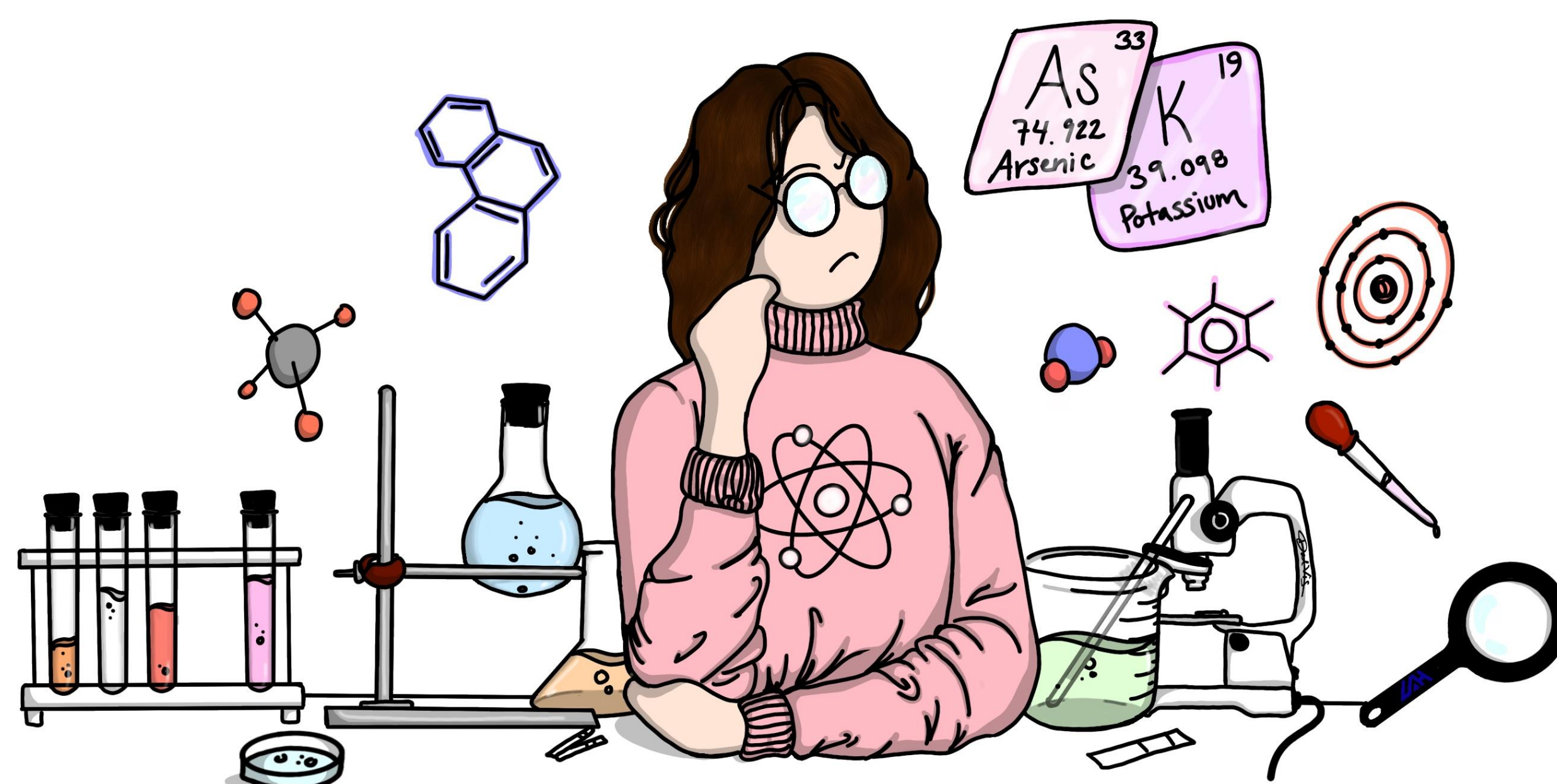


Being Afraid To “Look Stupid:” Examining Student Perspectives on Academic Interventions

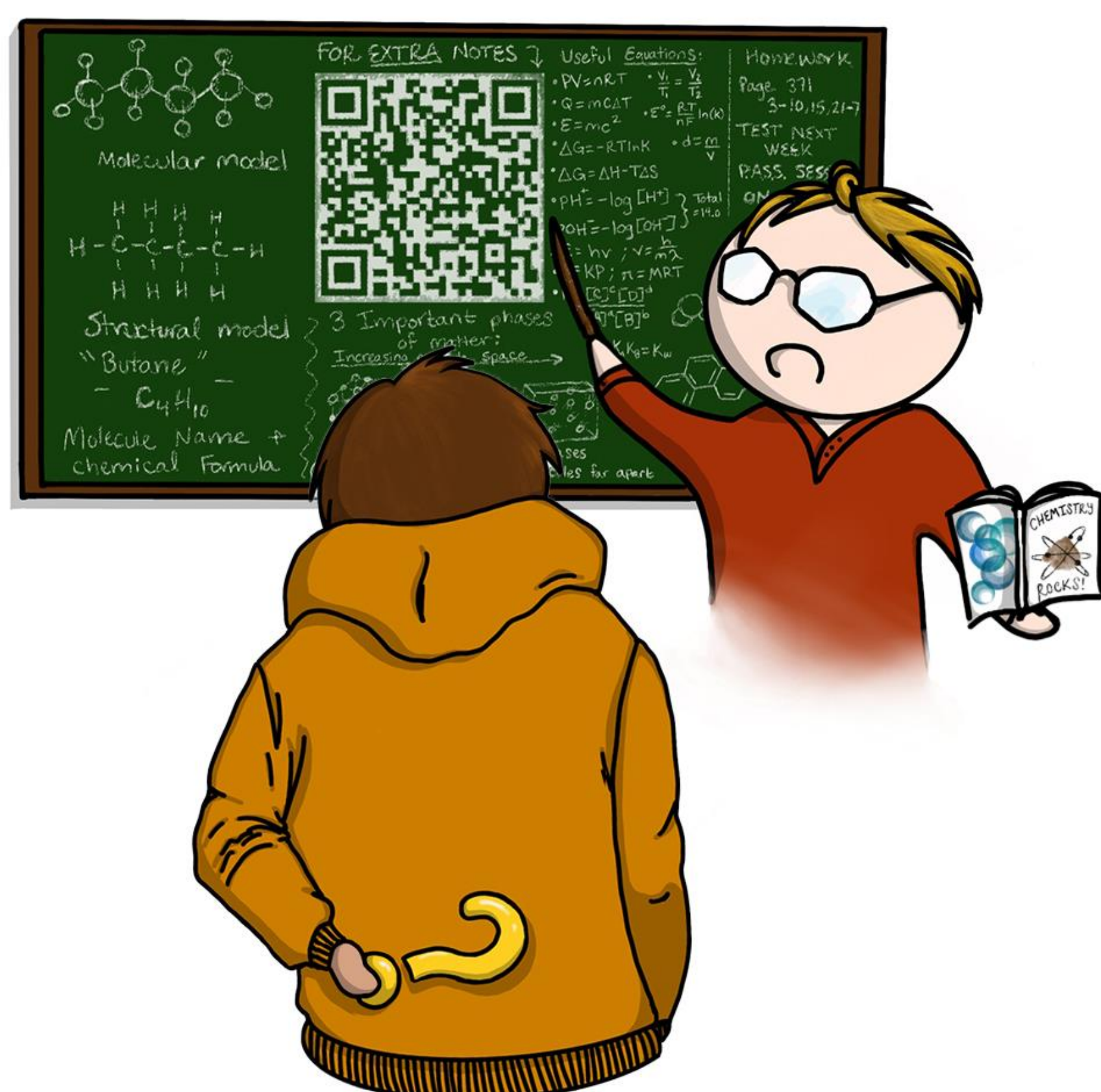
Dalia Altubuh, Psychology, Chemistry, Biology
Dr. Jennifer Sims, Sociology

A ‘fear of looking stupid’ stops many students from using available resources; even when assistance is described as helpful, students generally accredit course success to professors.

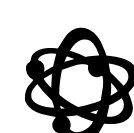
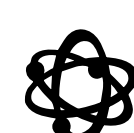
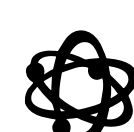


Overview

Our research questions focused on General Chemistry students’ views on offered course assistance. Available resources were Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS), asking questions to professors, and a special fall 2021 workshop. The interviews of seven students were analyzed following Deterding and Waters (2018)¹ using the qualitative data analysis program HyperRESEARCH. Data were coded into 11 analytical categories. This encompassed 48 subcodes involving the use of assistance, its effectiveness, and to what students attribute their success in the course.



Results

-  5 of the 7 respondents describe that their peers may be reluctant to seek help because of a ‘fear of looking stupid’ or general embarrassment.
-  All 7 students expressed that available resources were beneficial or lead to course success. Despite this, 5 attributed their success or use of resources to their professor.
-  3 students expressed the belief that professors should take the initiative to connect with and aide students. In doing so, they believed students would be more likely to seek help in that course.

References:

1. Deterding NM, Waters MC. Flexible Coding of In-depth Interviews: A Twenty-first-century Approach. *Sociological Methods & Research*. 2021;50(2):708-739. doi:[10.1177/0049124118799377](https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124118799377)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the UAH Sociology Department for the use of their Computer Lab and the National Science Foundation (1919953) for funding the data collection. The RCEU program is sponsored in part by the UAH Office of the President, Office of the Provost, Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, The Dean of the College of Science, the Dean of the College of Engineering, and the Alabama Space Grant Consortium. Finally, we would like to thank Dr. David Cook and Dr. Bernhard Vogler for their work in organizing this program for students.