

CHEM-342 Introduction to Biochemistry

Assignment for Zinoffsky (1886) - Making Figures that Count

Modern civilization depends on written communication. Along with the wheel, money, and mathematics, it ranks among the greatest human inventions. No doubt, anatomically modern humans communicated by spoken language long before written language. Thus, it was only recently (<5000 years) that the words we hear were transformed into the words we see. Given the timing, one could debate whether the “ancient” Chinese proverb, *One picture is worth a thousand words*, refers to written or spoken language (or both). Regardless, the proverb has relevance for communication today. Some thoughts and ideas defy written or spoken words, but yield to a pictorial representation. The mind-eye system, which enables us to see, has existed far longer than language or humans and has evolved to recognize patterns and interpret complex scenes. Yet, too often humans neglect the power of visual communication when communicating ideas.

The article by Zinoffsky in 1886 on the size of hemoglobin contains no illustrations (figures). Does it suffer as a consequence? Now that you have an idea of what Zinoffsky wanted to communicate, consider what figures or diagrams would have enabled you to understand his article better or more quickly.

Assignment:

On your own, generate several ideas for illustrations that would be appropriate for the Zinoffsky article. They can be conceptual or procedural. They can deal with big issues or difficult details. Consider any predominantly non-textual material that would have helped your understanding, if it had been part of the article. Then decide on one idea to develop into a figure that would supplement the article. Figures that illustrate fundamental principles using examples from Zinoffsky are also acceptable. Consider where the figure would appear in the article. Provide a title and appropriate legend. The figure will be evaluated and assigned a grade in terms of its relevance to the article, ease of apprehension, neatness, and overall effectiveness.