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BioMolViz: A Community Devoted to the Assessment of Biomolecular Visual Literacy

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Abstract

Educators in the molecular life sciences rely heavily on visual representations of biological molecules. The explicit instruction of visual literacy of the representations, however, is frequently overlooked, leaving students confused about what information is being communicated and/or assessed. The BioMolViz learning community was developed to bring attention to the need for visual literacy instruction and assessment distinct from the interpretation of these representations. Over the past several years, BioMolViz has organized interactive workshops devoted to enhancing instructor skillsets through the collaborative development of biomolecular visualization (BMV) assessments. In response to the pandemic, this year the workshops were moved online. In these workshops, participants engage with like minded scientists to design and peer review BMV assessments and share BMV resources, tools, and activities. Using the BioMolViz Framework (biomolviz.org), a tool that unpacks twelve overarching themes of BMV into a collection of learning goals and objectives, participants produce high-quality assessment instruments for evaluating visual literacy skills, which will be made broadly available to the molecular life sciences community through an online repository. We have found that our process encourages collaboration while developing assessment strategies, which has the added benefit of enriching the pedagogy of our growing community of educators. We will present our strategies for creating engaging workshops, the translation of these meetings to effective online experiences, and challenges resulting from the shift to online format. Guided by participant surveys, we have modified the online experience, and will share our plans for future

improvements to increase interactivity and sense of community. We invite the members of ASBMB to join our community of practice, providing an opportunity to expand their engagement with our growing and evolving network of collaborating educators.



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