

High Quality Sterile Media Lab for Growing Salt Water Algae

Introduction

This lab will give your students the opportunity to apply their knowledge of molar solutions by supplying the biology classes with a media that is ideal for the growth of algae in a sterile environment. The algae that the biology classes grow will be used to teach why plants make oils and how those oils could be used to create a biofuel that could eventually replace diesel as our primary fuel choice. Their final product can be assessed by the solution's ability to act as a medium for algae to successfully grow in.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will learn why certain chemicals are required to grow algae
- Students will learn introductory sterile techniques required in most professional biochemical laboratories.
- Students will learn about molar solutions.

Curriculum Alignment

North Carolina Essential Standards - Chemistry

Chm.2.2-Analyze chemical reactions in terms of quantities, product formation, and energy.

- Chm.2.2.4-Analyze the stoichiometric relationships inherent in a chemical reaction.
- Chm.2.2.5-Analyze quantitatively the composition of a substance (empirical formula, molecular formula, percent composition, and hydrates).

Chm.3.2-Understand solutions and the solution process.

- Chm.3.2.1-Classify substances using the hydronium and hydroxide ion concentrations.
- Chm.3.2.2-Summarize the properties of acids and bases.
- Chm.3.2.3-Infer the quantitative nature of a solution (molarity, dilution, and titration with a 1:1 molar ratio).
- Chm.3.2.4-Summarize the properties of solutions.
- Chm.3.2.6-Explain the solution process.

Time Required:

This lab could be completed in one block schedule class if the teacher makes the metal stock solution beforehand. If the teacher would like for the students to make the stock solution, then it will take two days.

Pre-Activities:

Students should have a basic understanding of moles, molecular weight, and simple stoichiometry. If you have more than one analytical balance, then you could have the students make the entire media. If you only have one, then the teacher should create the metal stock solution and the EDTA/FeCl₃ stock solution beforehand and let the students add the appropriate amounts to save adding an extra day. The stock solutions you create should last until the expiration date of the chemicals listed on the charts below.

Materials per group of three or four:

Water bottles (16oz or 500mL)

Chemical list (see attached media creation worksheet)

Gloves

Goggles

Digital balance

Goggle Sterilizing UV cabinet

Bunsen Burner and gas source

Distilled Water

Ethanol (70%)

5mL and 10mL pipets (sterile)

Micropipette (1000-100 μ L)

Hand Crank Pump for pipettes

Magnetic stirring rod options with stirring plates

pH tester

4 1000mL jars

Graduated Cylinders (1000mL) per group

Pre-Lab:

- 1.) Look at the media preparation page. Show your knowledge of molar solutions by filling in the blanks on the worksheet.
- 2.) Have your teacher check off your answers before creating the medium.
- 3.) Go over classroom safety procedures with using Ethanol, Bunsen Burners, and various chemicals.

Post-Lab:

- 1.) Name three reasons why you think it is important that professional biochemistry labs use sterile techniques?
- 2.) Why do algae (and plants in general) need the metals magnesium, potassium, manganese, copper, zinc, and molybdenum?
Make a chart that lists the elements and their usefulness.

Metal	Usefulness

- 3.) Why do you think nitrate and chloride compounds are so commonly used in a solution?
- 4.) If you found out that Mg helped grow algae more quickly, how would you adjust the media to incorporate more Mg?

Vocabulary:

See Google Definitions, www.oilgae.com, or medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com for best examples

Flocculation-

Sterile-

Mole-

Molecular weight-

Molar Solution-

Alternative Assessment:

Was the Biology class successful growing alga in your media? Discuss some other ways that a Chemist might be needed in a life science field.

Author Information

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KENAN FELLOWS PROGRAM



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Media Creation Lab

Lab Activity:

Consider the number of biology groups and make enough for each group as well as some for each teacher. Each group will need 500 mL (two water bottles filled with 250mL each) and each teacher will need 250mL.

To create the medium:

- 1.) Start with 750mL of distilled water in a beaker.
- 2.) Mix the components in order of listing on the Media Preparation Worksheet using the stirring rod option on a hot plate during the addition of each chemical at the specified amounts.
- 3.) Check the pH. The pH of the medium should be around 7.5. Adjust as needed with NaOH to raise pH or HCl to lower pH (preferably not both-add one or the other in very small increments.)
- 4.) Pour the medium into a 1000mL graduated cylinder in order to insure the amount is accurate. Add distilled water until the total amount is 1L.
- 5.) Gather some jars small enough to fit into the ultraviolet goggle sterilizing cabinet and sterilize the inside of the jars using UV light for 20+ minutes. Sterilize the outside of the jars by spraying them with 70% ethanol.
- 6.) Pour the medium into the jars and place the jars in the goggle cabinet. Sterilize medium once again with the UV light for 20+ minutes.
- 7.) Keep the medium in a refrigerator until the groups are ready to grow algae. Warm the medium in warm water or leave overnight in room temperature before adding algae.

Procedure for adding medium to a 500mL water bottle with sterile technique:

- 1.) Wash hands thoroughly with proper technique.
- 2.) Sterilize the water bottle and a plastic wrap covered 250mL graduated cylinder by placing them in the goggle sterilizing cabinet and turning the UV light on for 20 minutes
- 3.) **See Video for a demonstration of the next 5 steps:** Spray the water bottle with ethanol and place the water bottle and graduated cylinder in the sterile area.
CAUTION! CREATE AN ETHANOL SPRAYING AREA THAT IS FAR AWAY FROM THE BUNSEN BURNERS.
- 4.) Light a Bunsen burner to create a 10cm diameter sterile zone, spray the water bottle with ethanol, and place the water bottle and the graduated cylinder in the sterile area. Once they are in the 10cm sterile field you can remove the plastic wrap from the graduated cylinder.
- 5.) Spray the outside of the medium container with ethanol and place the medium inside the sterile area.
- 6.) Loosen (but do not remove) the cap on the water bottle and the cap on the medium without removing your hands from the sterile field. Remove and hold the medium cap in one hand without touching the inside of the cap and pour 250mL of the medium into a sterile 250mL graduated cylinder. Tighten the medium cap back on. Remove and hold the water bottle cap without touching the inside of the cap. Pour the medium into the water bottle and seal the cap on the water bottle. Leave the other 250mL of volume in the water bottle free to allow for gas exchange.
- 7.) Close the cap tightly and place the bottle in the UV goggle cabinet to sterilize for another 20 minutes. The water bottle can now be handled safely without compromising the sterility as long as the cap is not loosened before being placed in a sterile field once again.

Optional Procedure for adding algae with sterile technique to the water bottle photo bioreactor

- 1.) Spray the closed container of algae, water bottles, and all necessary equipment (including hands) with ethanol and place in sterile zone.
- 2.) Place all the water bottles and equipment near a Bunsen burner and then light the Bunsen burner to create a 10cm diameter sterile zone.
- 3.) Loosen the cap of water bottle but do not remove.
- 4.) Swirl the algae container so that each group is getting the same approximate amount of algae. Loosen the top of the algae without removing it.
- 5.) Open the top of the sterile pipette packaging where you will be attaching the pipette to the hand crank pump. **DO NOT TOUCH THE PIPETTE OR LAY IT DOWN.** Keep the pipette in the sterile field.
- 6.) Open algae container in the sterile field and use 10mL sterilized pipette and a hand crank pump pipette to withdraw 13mL of algae (the most that a 10mL pipette will hold).
- 7.) Take the cap off of the water bottle and release the algae into the bottle from the pipette. Hold the cap near the bottle in the sterile field with one hand while you release the algae into the bottle.
- 8.) Seal the bottle without touching inside the cap and gently swirl the algae to spread them throughout the medium.
- 9.) Place the bottle in the aquarium and loosen the cap **WITHOUT REMOVING** to allow for venting of gas exchange.

Teacher Answer Sheet for Pre and Post Lab Questions plus Vocabulary

Pre Lab: See Teacher Answer Key for Media Worksheet.

Post Lab:

- 1.) Name three reasons why you think it is important that professional biochemistry labs use sterile techniques? **Multiple answers are possible. Professional labs want to make sure that the products they make are safe, consistent and reproducible, and uncontaminated.**
- 2.) Why do algae (and plants in general) need the metals magnesium, potassium, manganese, copper, zinc, and molybdenum? Make a chart that lists the elements and their usefulness.

Metal	Usefulness
Magnesium	Used in photosynthesis and in the uptake of other essential nutrients. Also used to make seeds.
Potassium	Nutrient used to build cells and tissue. Contributes to overall hardness of the plant.
Manganese	Necessary for chlorophyll formation and essential cellular functions.
Copper	Contributes to plant metabolism and reproduction.
Zinc	Multiple answers possible. Combines with other elements to carry out numerous natural processes including the formation of chlorophyll.
Molybdenum	Needed to produce essential proteins.

- 3.) Why do you think nitrate and chloride compounds are so commonly used in a solution? **These two compounds are both easily soluble in water, so they are great for incorporating various desirable elements into a growth media.**
- 4.) If you found out that Mg helped grow algae more quickly, how would you adjust the media to incorporate more Mg? **Run multiple trials in which they increase the molarity of MgSO₄ by adding more MgSO₄ crystals, or you could keep the molarity of all the solutions the same, but increase the volume of the solution added to the sample. A higher level answer would be if you left MgSO₄ at .5M but increase the volume to 150mL, you have also added more Mg ions without increasing the concentration, meaning no possible increase in the toxicity of the media.**

Critical Vocabulary:

Flocculation- The gathering together of fine particles in water by gentle mixing after the addition of coagulant chemicals to form larger particles

Sterile- Free from all live bacteria or other microorganisms and their spores.

Mole-The SI unit of amount of substance, equal to the quantity containing as many elementary units as there are atoms in 0.012 kg of carbon-12.

Molecular weight-The ratio of the average mass of one molecule of an element or compound to one twelfth of the mass of an atom of carbon-12.

Molar Solution- a homogeneous mixture of one or more substances (solutes) dispersed molecularly in a sufficient quantity of dissolving medium (solvent).

Alternative Assessment:

Was the Biology class successful growing alga in your media? Discuss some other ways that a Chemist might be needed in a life science field. **Partnering a Biology class with your Chemistry class can show your students how the molar solution they created is actually being used to grow a living organism. This gives relevance and a greater sense of accomplishment which will assist with deepening their understanding and could provide an opportunity for you to discuss career opportunities for chemistry.**

Media Preparation Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Use your knowledge of molar solutions to fill in the blanks below. Do not start to create the media until your teacher has approved your answers.

The following solutions need to be created beforehand and then added in order to the media below

Compound	Stock Concentration	Grams per 1 Liter	Molecular weight (g/mole)	Stock molarity (M)	Final concentration in Wang 2007 (M)	Amount to put in 1 Liter of Wang 2007 from stock solution (mL)
MgSO ₄ 7H ₂ O (mL)	12g/100mL	120		0.500	.005	10.0
CaCl ₂ 2H ₂ O (mL)	3g/100mL	30	147.0154	0.200		0.600
KH ₂ PO ₄ (mL)	5g/100mL	50	136.0852	0.400	0.00012	

2007 Wang Media for algae growth

Chemical Name	Final Concentration	Molecular Weight	1 Liter of media pH buffered to 7.5
NaCl	1 M		58.448 g
NaHCO ₃		84.007g/mol	4.2 g
KNO ₃		101.103g/mol	0.5055 g
MgSO ₄ (mL) From stock	0.005 M	246.47g/mol	10mL of student created stock
CaCl ₂ 2H ₂ O (mL) From stock	0.00012M	147.0154g/mol	0.600mL of student created stock
KH ₂ PO ₄ (mL) From stock	0.00012M	136.0852g/mol	0.300mL of student created stock
EDTA	0.000006 M	292.24g/mol	10 mL of the teacher created EDTA and FeCl ₃ stock
FeCl ₃	0.000002 M	270.3g/mol	
MnCl ₂	0.000007 M		1 mL of the 1000X teacher created metal stock solution
ZnSO ₄	0.000001 M	179.461g/mol	
Co(NO ₃) ₂	0.000001 M	182.943g/mol	
CuSO ₄	0.000001 M	159.610g/mol	
(NH ₄) ₆ Mo ₇ O ₂₄	0.000001 M		
**Tris	0.010 M (only in pH 7.5)	121.14g/mol	10 mL of 1M stock at pH 7.5

*EDTA is used to hold the iron so that the iron is used by the algae and not oxidized or taken up by other reactions (not needed for this media)

**Tris works as a buffering molecule that changes structure as the pH changes. The intent is to slow the process of alkalinity that the alga naturally creates. Tris is a base, so you may have to change the pH of the Tris to 7.5 preferably using either NaOH or HCl to adjust your 1 molar solution.

Teacher Answer Key for Media Worksheet

Directions: Use your knowledge of molar solutions to fill in the blanks below. Do not start to create the media until your teacher has approved your answers.

The following solutions need to be created beforehand and then added in order to the media below

Compound	Stock Concentration	Grams per 1 Liter	Molecular weight (g/mole)	Stock molarity (M)	Final concentration in Wang 2007 (M)	Amount to put in 1 Liter of Wang 2007 from stock solution (mL)
MgSO ₄ 7H ₂ O (mL)	12g/100mL	120	246.47	0.500	.005	10.0
CaCl ₂ 2H ₂ O (mL)	3g/100mL	30	147.0154	0.200	0.00012	0.600
KH ₂ PO ₄ (mL)	5g/100mL	50	136.0852	0.400	0.00012	0.300

2007 Wang Media for algae growth

Chemical Name	Final Concentration	Molecular Weight	1 Liter of media pH buffered to 7.5
NaCl	1 M	58.448g/mol	58.448 g
NaHCO ₃	0.050 M	84.007g/mol	4.2 g
KNO ₃	0.005 M	101.103g/mol	0.5055 g
MgSO ₄ (mL)	0.005 M	246.47g/mol	10mL of student created stock
CaCl ₂ 2H ₂ O (mL)	0.00012M	147.0154g/mol	0.600mL of student created stock
KH ₂ PO ₄ (mL)	0.00012M	136.0852g/mol	0.300mL of students created stock
EDTA	0.000006 M	292.24g/mol	10 mL of the teacher created EDTA and FeCl ₃ stock
FeCl ₃	0.000002 M	270.3g/mol	
MnCl ₂	0.000007 M	125.844g/mol	1 mL of the 1000X teacher created metal stock solution
ZnSO ₄	0.000001 M	179.461g/mol	
Co(NO ₃) ₂	0.000001 M	182.943g/mol	
CuSO ₄	0.000001 M	159.610g/mol	
(NH ₄) ₆ Mo ₇ O ₂₄	0.000001 M	1235.86g/mol	
**Tris	0.010 M (only in pH 7.5)	121.14g/mol	10 mL of 1M stock at pH 7.5

*EDTA is used to hold the iron so that the iron is used by the algae and not oxidized or taken up by other reactions (not needed for this media)

**Tris works as a buffering molecule that changes structure as the pH changes. The intent is to slow the process of alkalinity that the alga naturally creates. Tris is a base, so you may have to change the pH of the Tris to 7.5 preferably using either NaOH or HCl to adjust your 1 molar solution.

Teacher Stock Solution Preparation Worksheet

2007 Wang Metal Stock Solution

A little goes a long way with this stock solution. 100mL of stock should be enough for 9 chemistry classes with eight groups of four students each.

Chemical Name	Final concentration in 1000X stock (M)	Molecular Weight (g/mole)	Amount for 1 L (g)
MnCl ₂ 4H ₂ O	0.007M	197.9057 g/mole	1.385 g
ZnSO ₄ 7H ₂ O	0.001M	287.54 g/mole	0.288 g
Co(NO ₃) ₂ 6H ₂ O	0.001M	291.03 g/mole	0.291 g
CuSO ₄ 5H ₂ O	0.001M	249.68 g/mole	0.250 g
(NH ₄) ₆ Mo ₇ O ₂₄ 4H ₂ O	0.001M	1235.8727 g/mole	1.236 g

2007 Wang EDTA and FeCl₃ stock solution

One Liter of the following stock solution will be enough for 9 chemistry classes with eight groups of four students each.

Chemical Name	Final concentration in 100X stock (M)	Molecular Weight (g/mole)	Amount for 1 L in grams
EDTA	0.0006M	292.24 g/mole	0.175 g
FeCl ₃ 6H ₂ O	0.0002M	270.3 g/mole	0.054 g