List of Common Non-Textual Elements in Research

Chart -- see "graph;" (alternative term).

Diagram -- a drawing that illustrates or visually explains a thing or idea by outlining its component parts and the relationships among them. Also a line drawing, made to accompany and illustrate a geometrical theorem, mathematical demonstration, etc.

Drawing -- a graphic illustration of representing a person, place, or object or a technique for outlining the geometry, layout, location, and design of a figure, plan, or sketch by means of lines.

Figure -- a form bounded by three or more lines; one or more digits or numerical symbols representing a number.

Flowchart -- a pictorial summary [graphical algorithm] of the decisions and flows [movement of information] that make up a procedure or process from beginning to end. Also called flow diagram, flow process chart, or network diagram.

Form -- a logically structured document with a fixed arrangement of captioned spaces designed for entering, extracting, or communicating required or requested information.

Graph -- a two-dimensional drawing showing a relationship [usually between two set of numbers] by means of a line, curve, a series of bars, or other symbols. Typically, an independent variable is represented on the horizontal line (X-axis) and an dependent variable on the vertical line (Y-axis). The perpendicular axis intersect at a point called origin, and are calibrated in the units of the quantities represented. Though a graph usually has four quadrants representing the positive and negative values of the variables, usually only the north-east quadrant is shown when the negative values do not exist or are of no interest. Often used interchangeably with the term “chart.”

Histogram -- step-column chart that displays a summary of the variations in (frequency distribution of) quantities [called Classes] that fall within certain lower and upper limits in a set of data. Classes are measured on the horizontal ('X') axis, and the number of times they occur [or the percentages of their occurrences] are measured on the vertical ('Y') axis. To construct a histogram, rectangles or blocks are drawn on the x-axis [without any spaces between them] whose areas are proportional to the classes they represent. Histograms [and histographs] are used commonly where the subject item is discrete (such as the number of students in a school) instead of being continuous [such as the variations in their heights]. Also called frequency diagram, a histogram is usually preferred over a histograph where the number of classes is less than eight.

Illustration -- a visual representation [e.g., picture or diagram] that is used to make a subject in a paper more pleasing or easier to understand.

Map -- a visual representation of an area. It is considered to be a symbolic depiction highlighting relationships between elements of that space such as objects, regions, and themes. Examples of types include climate, economic, resource, physical, political, road, and topographic maps.

Pictograph -- visual presentation of data using icons, pictures, symbols, etc., in place of or in addition to common graph elements [bars, lines, points]. Pictographs use relative sizes or repetitions of the same icon, picture, or symbol to show comparison. Also called a pictogram, pictorial chart, pictorial graph, or picture graph.
Symbol -- Mark, sign, or word that indicates, signifies, or is understood as representing an idea, object, or relationship.

Table -- an orderly arrangement of quantitative data in columns and rows. Also called a “matrix.”

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