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# How can we start with modeling?

Tomas Helikar

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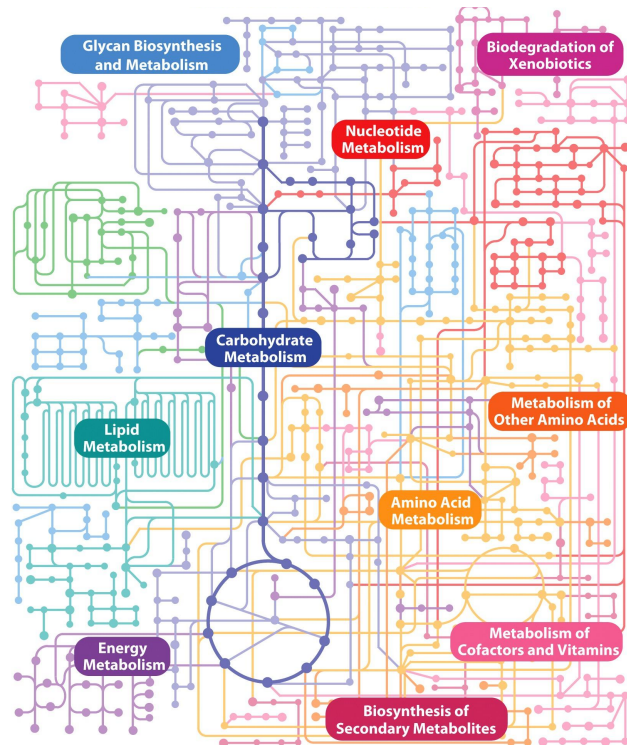
Susan J Rosowski Professor  
Department of Biochemistry  
University of Nebraska at Lincoln

# 1. Define Model Scope

Biological networks can be large and complicated.

Scientists build models to answer biological questions.

Example: Under what conditions does the lac operon function?



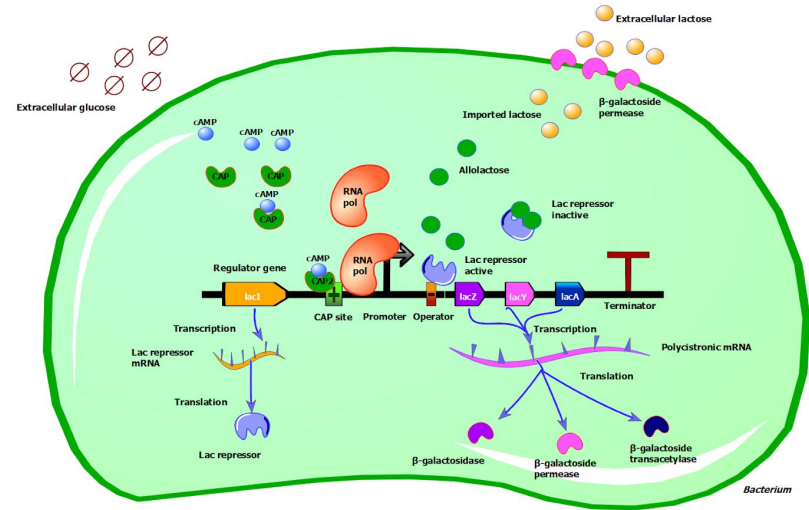
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Consider the Lac Operon:

- What behavior(s) should the model exhibit?
- What components and relationships are required to elicit that behavior?



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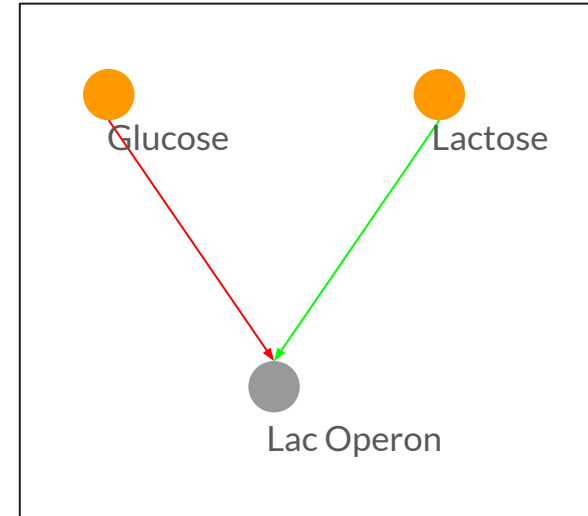
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## 2. Define Validation Criteria

Validation criteria can be thought of as relationships (qualitative or quantitative) between inputs and outputs.

1. Define Model Scope

2. Define Validation Criteria

**Table 1.** Validation criteria for the modeled *lac* operon system.

	Glucose	Lactose	<i>lac</i> Operon transcription
Validation Criterion 1	present	absent	OFF
Validation Criterion 2	present	present	OFF
Validation Criterion 3	absent	present	ON
Validation Criterion 4	absent	absent	OFF

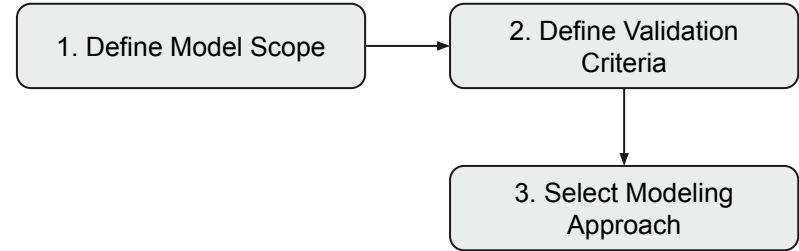
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# 3. Select Modeling Approach

Many mathematical and computational frameworks are available:

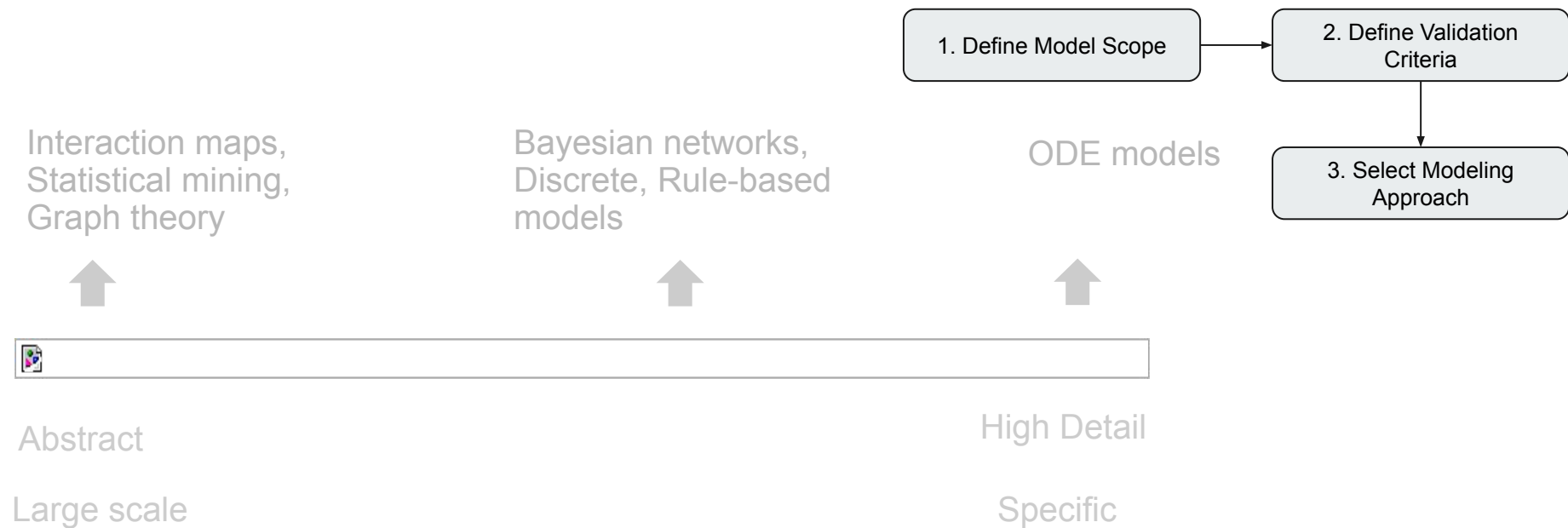
## Examples:

- Logical models
- Kinetic models
- Constraint-based models



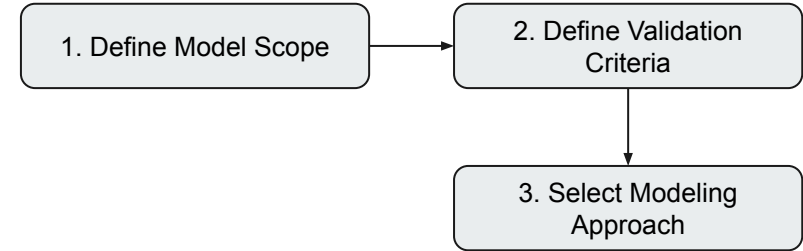
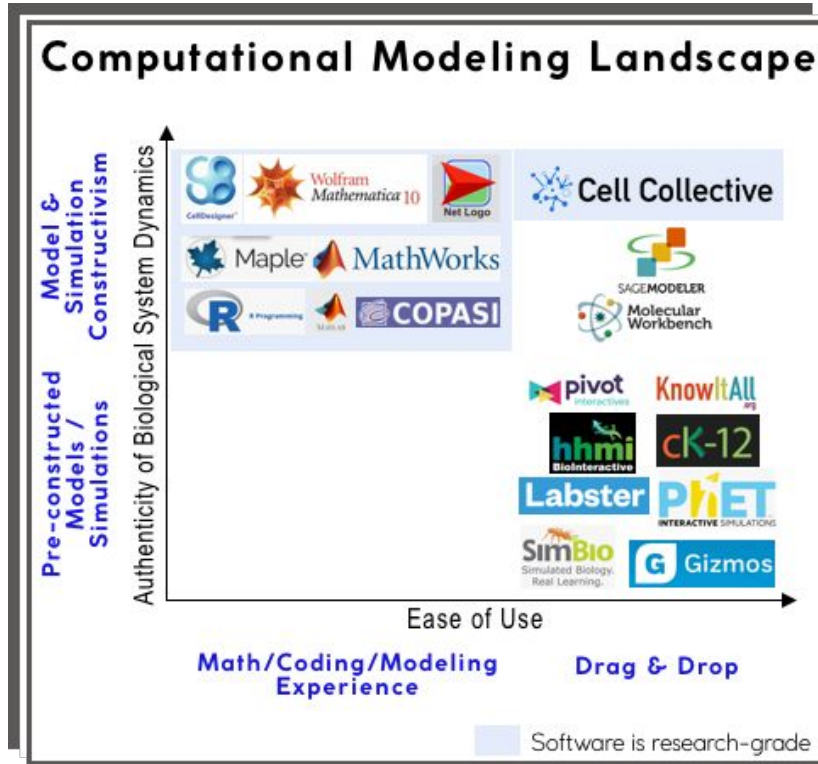
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# 4. Identify Components & Interactions, and Build a Draft Model

Determine the specific components that will be represented in the model and the relationship(s) between them.

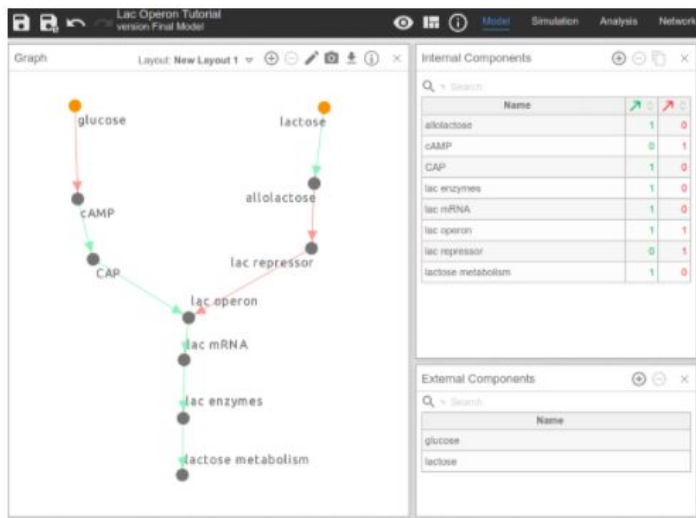
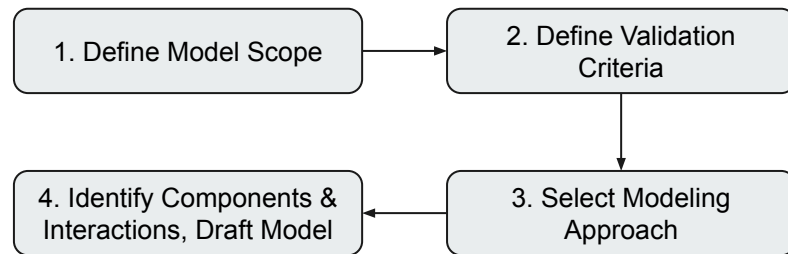


Figure 6. Fully connected network diagram of the *lac* operon model.



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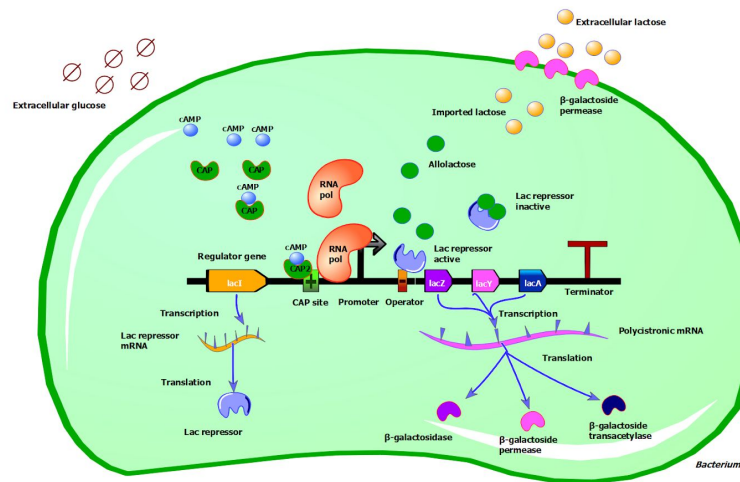
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### Possible sources:

- Expert Knowledge
- Static Diagrams
- Published Literature

Cell Collective interprets the diagram so that it functions as a simulatable model.

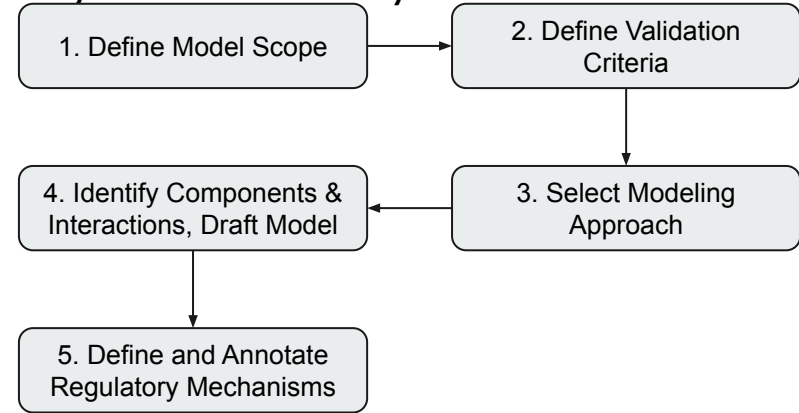


# 5. Define and Annotate Regulatory Mechanisms

Well annotated models facilitate transparency and reusability.

## Levels of Annotation in Cell Collective:

- Model
- Regulatory Mechanism



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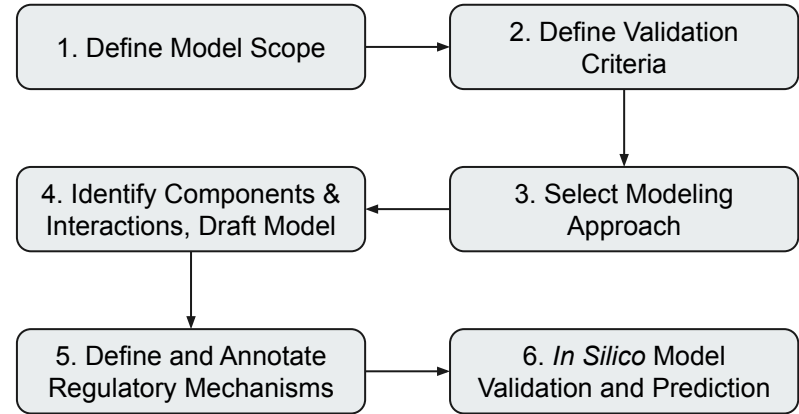
## Levels of Annotation in Cell Collective:

- Model
- Regulatory Mechanism

Knowledge Base <i>HK</i>
<b>Description</b>
Hexokinase (ENZYME)
<b>Regulatory Mechanism Summary</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hexokinase (HK) converts glucose to glucose-6-phosphate (G6P).</li><li>Hexokinase (HK) is inhibited by its product, glucose-6-phosphate (G6P), via negative cooperativity. This negative feedback mechanism is NOT dependent on the energy charge of the cell.</li></ul>
<b>Upstream Regulators</b>
G6P
glucose
<b>Standard Annotations</b>
<b>References</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Aleshin AE, Zeng C, Bourenkov GP, Bartunik HD, Fromm HJ, and Honzatko RB. <i>The mechanism of regulation of hexokinase: new insights from the crystal structure of recombinant human brain hexokinase complexed with glucose and glucose-6-phosphate</i>. Structure 1998 Jan 156; (1) 39-50.pmid:9493266</li></ol>

## 6. *In Silico* Model Validation and Prediction

Simulate the model to test whether it can reproduce the dynamics and behaviors defined in the validation criteria.



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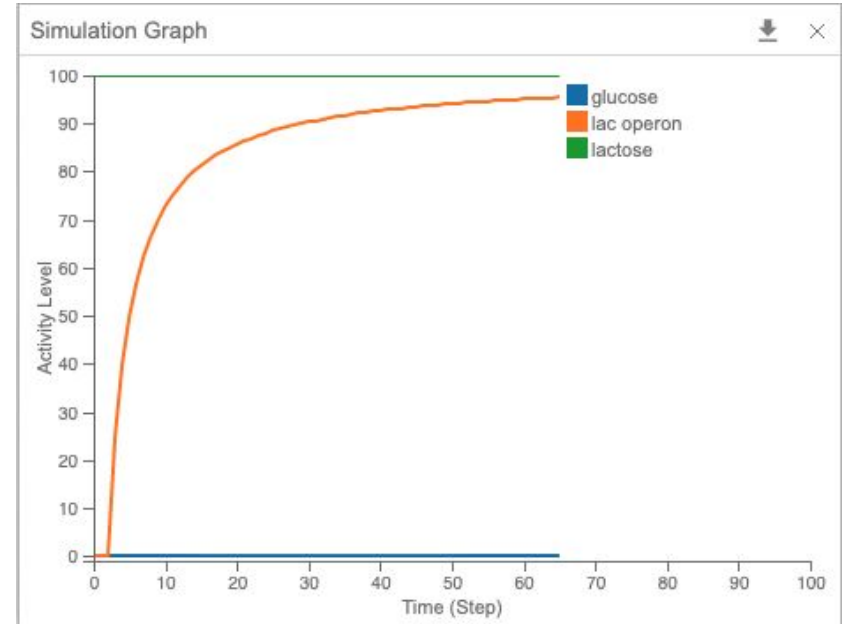
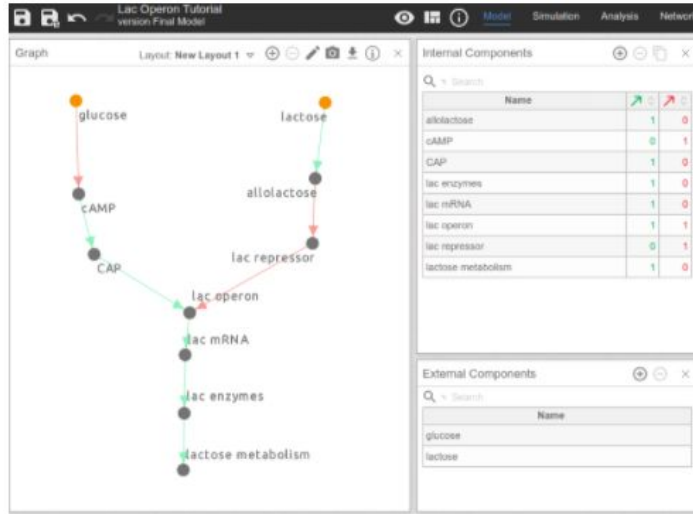


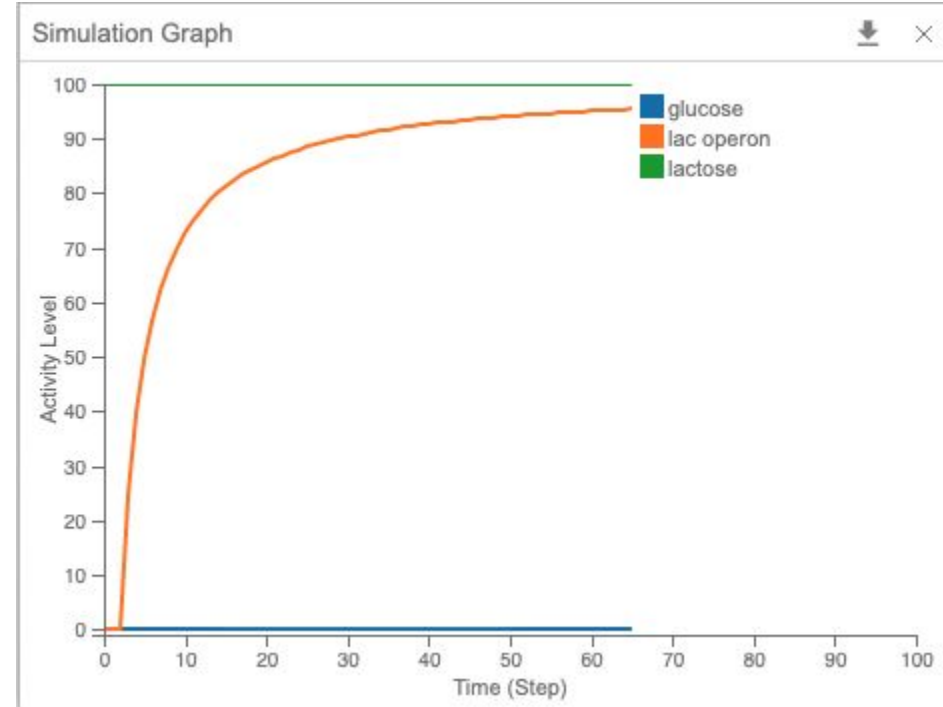
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With a validated model, we can test:

- *In silico* knock-outs
- Over-expressions
- Combinations of the above
- Dose-response
- Identify optimal intervention points

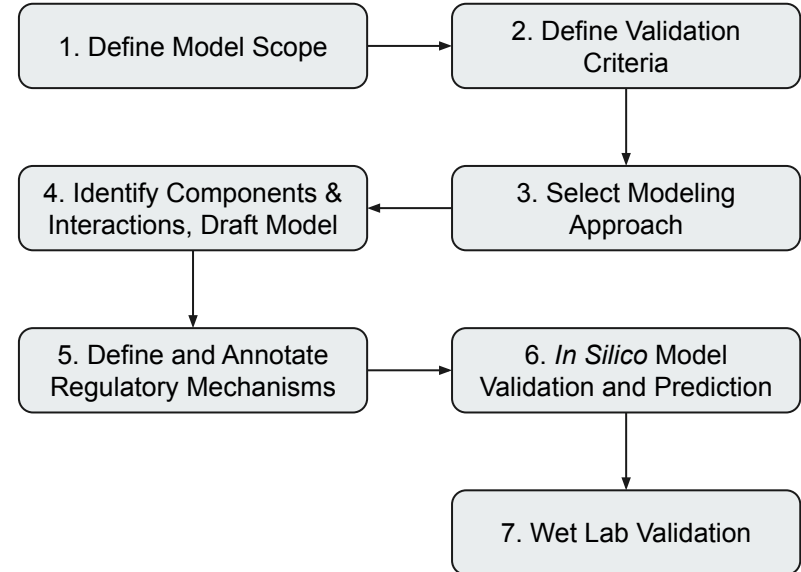


# 7. Wet Lab Validation

Hypotheses generated using a model can be validated experimentally.

## Benefits of Computational Modeling:

- Identify experiments likely to succeed
- Saves Resources
- Saves Time

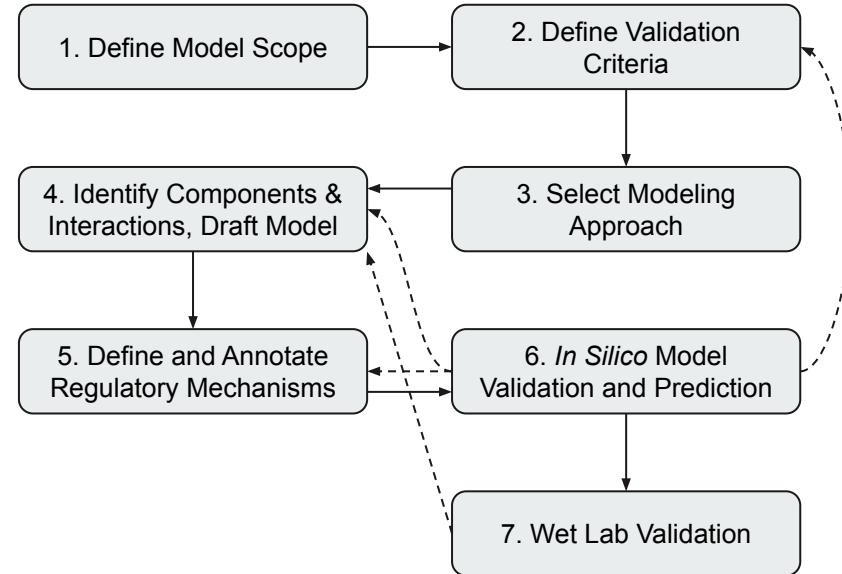


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# 8. Possible Needs for Revision

Like the scientific process, modeling is iterative with multiple points that may require revision.



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# Your Turn!!

[Niarakis, A., & Helikar, T. \(2020\). A practical guide to mechanistic systems modeling in biology using a logic-based approach. \*Briefings in Bioinformatics\*.](#)

