

SAVE
THE
DATE



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Coming soon:

The EduCon organising committee will soon be inviting microbiology educators to submit an abstract for either a poster or 15 min oral presentation.

Have you applied for an ASM teaching award?

There are three teaching awards offered by ASM:

1. **The ASM Teacher's travel award:** The recipient receives a plaque given at the meeting's award ceremony, \$1000 prize money and a full conference registration to the Annual Scientific Meeting.
2. **The ASM USA Teachers' travel award:** The aim of this award is to enable attendance at the American Society of Microbiology Conference for undergraduate educators, known as ASMCUE. The award consists of up to \$3,000 in travel expenses to attend the American Society of Microbiology Conference.
3. **The ASM David White Award for Excellence in Teaching:** The recipient receives a plaque given at the meeting's award ceremony, \$1000 prize money and full conference registration to this year's Annual Scientific Meeting. They are also expected to present at the following year's EduCon event.

Applications for these teaching awards close March 31, 2022.

For more information and links to the application sites, please see the EdSIG website for links to these awards. <https://www.theasm-edsig.org.au/education-awards> or the ASM website <https://www.theasm.org.au/> (search for the award you are interested in applying for).

Also consider applying for the **Australian University Teacher of the year:** Details and links on our web site.



ASM CONFERENCE FOR
UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATORS
JULY 13-15, 2022 | ONLINE



<https://asm.org/Events/ASM-Conference-for-Undergraduate-Educators/Home>

The ASM Conference for Undergraduate Educators (ASMCUE) is driven by, for and with the community! Attendees gather to learn classroom strategies, hear biology education research updates and meet new colleagues who teach the same classes. For undergraduate educators, ASMCUE Virtual is an event not to be missed!



VIRTUAL EDUCON 2021

It was always planned that Virtual EduCon 2021 would be run online, so the terrible news about Victoria's re-instated lockdown and the rapid switch from face to face to online for the main Melbourne ASM conference did not change our plans. However, I suspect that many EduCon delegates felt somewhat unnerved by the rapidly changing conditions, and most of you were undoubtedly worried about yet another semester spent reacting to changing edicts and spiralling workloads. I hope that Virtual EduCon was a respite from these worries, and a way to connect with other educators who have a lived experience of the practical and psychological pressures that you are under.

Our Keynote address was delivered by **Jack Wang** from UQ who was the 2020 recipient of the ASM David White Excellence in Teaching award and is the current Universities Australia University Teacher of the Year (2021). Jack spoke about the evolution of his online video library and gave some great tips about natural (maybe starting as un-natural) delivery and producing engaging presentations. A link to Jack's YouTube channel is provided on the Free Educational Resources page on the EduCon website: <https://www.theasm-edsig.org.au/free-educational-resources>.

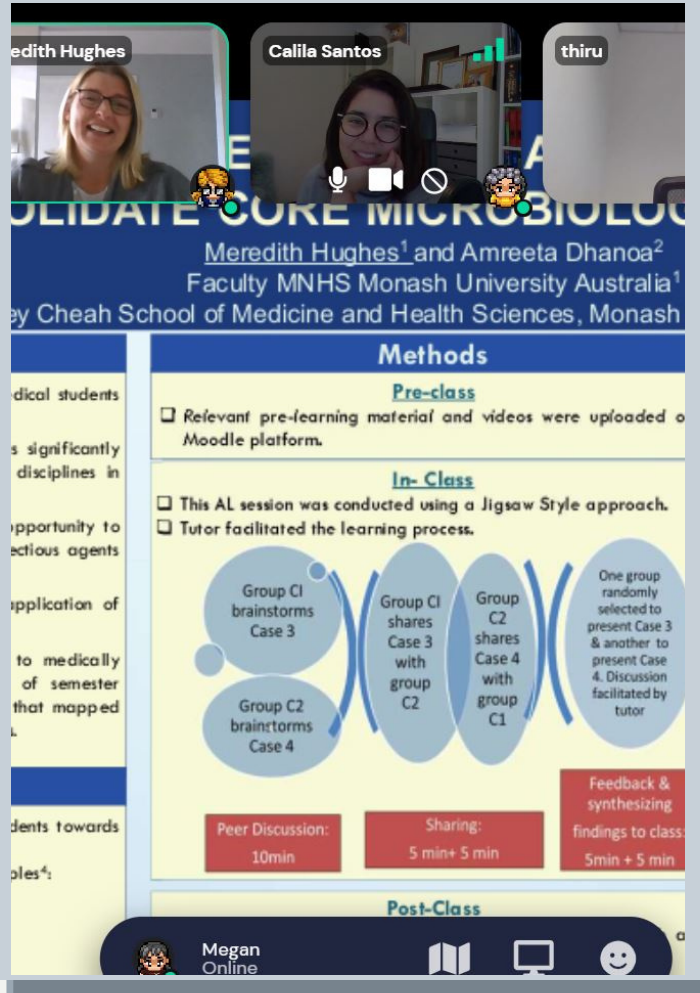
Dave Westenberg (Missouri S&T) then provided an engaging presentation on ways to connect students with the microbial world around them utilizing agar art, online resources, games and food leading to excited students, energised teachers and great outcomes for all. Dave kindly provided a copy of his slides, so contact Megan if you would like the link.

After a chatty coffee break in breakout rooms we heard from **Gal Winter** and **Dane Lyddiard** from the University of New England who presented their innovative and courageous program of practical classes in the home. This involved developing a kit that was sent to students so that they could carry out experiments safely and with online supervision. The hands-on experience fostered the love of microbiology during COVID for this very lucky student cohort.

Education Special Interest group committee

Convenor - Thiru Vanniasinkam

Committee: Megan Lloyd, Gal Winter Ziv, Rebecca LeBard, Priscilla Johanesen, Meredith Hughes, Megan Lenardon, Senaka Ranadheera. edsig.asm@gmail.com



The screenshot shows a virtual classroom interface with three video thumbnails at the top: Meredith Hughes, Calila Santos, and thiru. Below them is a slide titled "Methods" with the following content:

Methods

Pre-class

- Relevant pre-learning material and videos were uploaded on Moodle platform.

In-Class

- This AL session was conducted using a Jigsaw Style approach.
- Tutor facilitated the learning process.

The slide includes a diagram of the Jigsaw approach:

- Group C1 brainstorms Case 3
- Group C2 brainstorms Case 4
- Group C1 shares Case 3 with group C2
- Group C2 shares Case 4 with group C1
- One group randomly selected to present Case 3 & another to present Case 4. Discussion facilitated by tutor.

Post-Class

- Peer Discussion: 10min
- Sharing: 5 min+ 5 min
- Feedback & synthesizing findings to class: 5min + 5 min

At the bottom, there is a "Megan Online" chat window and navigation icons.

Figure 1: Lunchbreak was spent investigating the virtual world of **Gathertown** which was used to host a virtual poster session. Megan managed to talk over everyone (sorry Meredith) but hopefully the utility of sites that provide a virtual classroom option were highlighted. 😊

Then, **Karla Cardenas Gomez** from the Menzies School of Health Research introduced the Ramaciotti Regional and Remote Health Sciences Training Centre and spoke about their experiences and success in developing a local biomedical and health sciences workforce by engaging local youth in training activities with the long-term aim of supporting entry into careers in the regional and remote health science workforce, including microbiology skills. This fantastic program includes tailored learning and mentorship and is aimed to improve the continuity of care in the NT.

Before our lunch break, **Danilla Grando** from RMIT University provided a wonderful talk about the practicalities of using images in our presentations and the considerations about copyright that should all be aware of. To this end, future iterations of the EdSIG website are planned to include a curated selection of images that will be available for download by all educators world wide under a creative commons licence.

Lunchtime provided an opportunity for delegates to investigate a virtual classroom developed using **Gathertown** and allowed a small poster presentation session to run (Figure 1).

After lunch, **Sophie Paquet-Fifield** from the University of Melbourne spoke about the experiences providing both wholly online Pathology practical classes and dual (face to face and online) delivery modes. Where students performed their own experiments in face to face classes, online students followed a demonstrator in real time, generated group results and were able to discuss these in a dynamic online learning community. This ensured that skills such as critical thinking and science communication were demonstrated for all students - a great example of what is achievable in the online space.

Next, the ASM online community, and the Education community within this site were introduced and delegates were encouraged to sign up and contribute to the discussion by **Rebecca LeBard** from the University of NSW and **Thiru Vanniasinkam** from Charles Sturt University.

The possibility of the ASM Education Community being used as an online community of practise was suggested. This would be great, particularly for educators who are the sole microbiology teacher at their institution - the isolation can leave you feeling unsupported particularly where there are pressures on such things as moderation and benchmarking of subjects. Thiru and Rebecca also included the dynamic **Tim Paustian** from the University of Wisconsin-Madison who challenged us to evaluate some common Microbiology misconceptions in order to better target our teaching (Figure 2). For more information on this topic (it was so interesting) look at his publication: Briggs, Amy G., et al. "Concept inventory development reveals common student misconceptions about microbiology." *Journal of Microbiology & Biology Education* 18.3 (2017): 18-3.

Charmaine Lloyd from Swinburne University then presented a fascinating talk on the use of blogging as a tool for real time learning in her Medical Microbiology subject with a student population that was likely to enter industry. This ingenious program (developed pre COVID-19) aimed to ensure that students were aware of emerging newsworthy stories and utilized quality sites (e.g. WHO) to follow the story as it developed in real time.

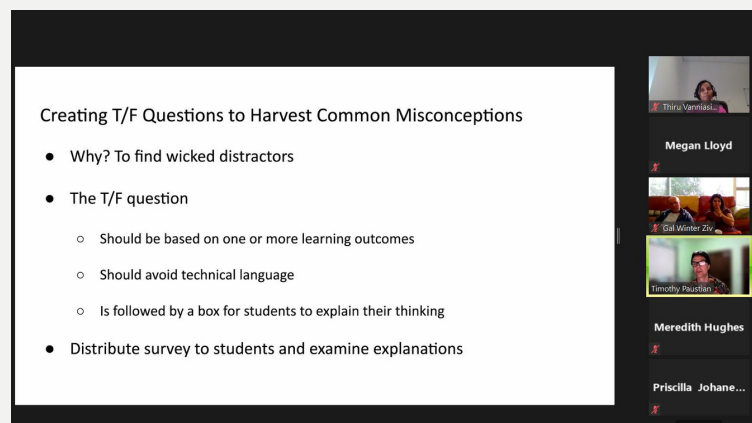


Figure 2: Tim Paustian from the University of Wisconsin-Madison challenged us to understand the common misconceptions held by our students - and to dispell them

Our final speaker was **Angela Brew** from Macquarie University and the Australasian Council for Undergraduate Research students. She spoke about the outstanding learning experiences that can flow from integrating research into tertiary undergraduate classes and challenged us all to consider how this could be implemented more widely. This innovative thinking and the provision of these "authentic" experiences can help to produce graduates that are better prepared for future employment.

We then had a short Annual General Meeting, during which I handed over the role of Convenor of the Education Special Interest Group to **Thiru Vanniasinkam** from Charles Sturt University. Thiru's interest in teaching and exceptional organizational skills will ensure that EdSIG continues to be the model for Special Interest Groups within ASM. Thank you for being willing to take this on!

I would like to thank **Meredith Hughes** for stepping in as Chair at the last minute (I literally warned her the day before that my internet connection may be unstable and confirmed minutes before the conference started). Thanks Meredith for your flexibility and cheerful nature!

I'd also like to sincerely thank **Priscilla Johanesen** who organised the registration and zoom links, handled the finance for non-members and who kept me on track with gentle suggestions and understanding when I did things at the last minute - abstract book anyone?

Thanks to the past Convenor **Karena Waller** for her support, I hope that I'll be able to provide the same help in turn.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your support and friendship whilst I have been Convenor, what a weird time it has been. The lengths that you have all gone to in order to ensure that your students are not further disadvantaged by this pandemic have been inspirational. Good luck and much strength to you all.