And it begins!

For many of us the challenge of engaging students with microbiology, safely, in their homes remains a difficult one but not impossible. We at REMNet are trying a variety of different approaches to teach students about microbiology, many of which are very easy to do, not very expensive but very exciting to perform for students. They are also accessible to their families, roommates and friends and may generate pretty interesting conversations about microbes!

The great yeast shortage of 2020 was solved by folks engaging with sourdough starters. Why not make use of the fantastic resources of the Dunn lab and have your students generate their own starters and to monitor them over time and record their data in online notebooks such as Benchling.

Another possibility is to have your students find mud and set up Winogradsky columns. There is a wealth of resources online for this and you again have your students record the column over time and document it in their notebooks.

A really simple experiment that will allow you to tackle hand-washing was pioneered by some Idaho school teachers and has recently been covered online and in social media. Using simple slices of bread and having your students touch them before and after hand-washing is a great way to demonstrate the utility of soap and water and you can combine this with citizen science and outreach activities.

Lastly check out all of what the journal Nature has to offer on the microbiome here.
COVID AND THE MICROBIOME?

If you’re looking for ways to bring the Pandemic into your microbiology and microbiome related courses, consider having your students review the emerging literature that is suggesting linkages between outcomes and the microbiome. Cui et al. (2020) have shown that the gut microbiota of patients with COVID-19 differed from that of H1N1 patients and healthy controls, suggesting the potential value of the gut microbiota as a possible diagnostic biomarker and therapeutic target for COVID-19. Another small study of 30 COVID patients described alterations in the fungal microbiome, with enrichment of fungal pathogens from the genera Candida and Aspergillus during hospitalization as compared with controls.

OPPORTUNITIES

Monthly JMBE LIVE!!

Announcing a new free webinar series featuring an informal discussion with editors and authors from JMBE. Our first meeting will be Friday, September 11, 1 – 2 PM Eastern time/10-11 AM Pacific time. This meeting will feature editors of the JMBE Special Themed issue ‘Teaching in a Time of Crisis’ who will take your questions about preparing manuscripts for the upcoming Special Themed Issue. To learn more about the JMBE Special Themed issue, click here (deadline is October 1!).

Register in advance for the September 11 meeting with editors of JMBE’s ‘Teaching in a Time of Crisis’: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tUModuupzwqoE9Q6ikB5dxKfKnPoUjmjW2TD

There is no cost to attend. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Meeting will be recorded.

ASM AWARD 2021

This year’s ASM Award for Education has gone to Nichole Broderick. Many of us know Nichole for her amazing work with Tiny Earth. We are all delighted for her!

The award recognizes general excellence in microbiology education. Education is broadly defined and meant to include any and all activities that inform and motivate students about the discipline of microbiology.

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