

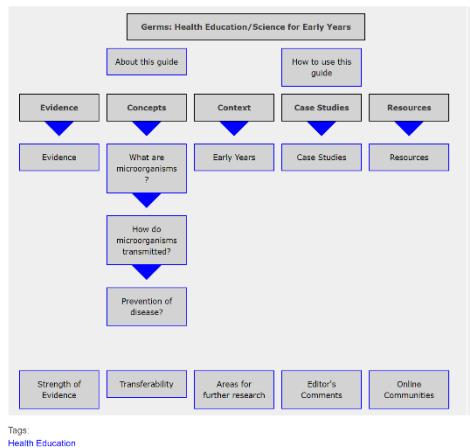
MESHGuides Press Release: Coronavirus and 'A Germ's Journey' International Project

(MESH – Mapping Education Specialist KnowHow)

At the same time that the Coronavirus outbreak was being kept quiet in China, the Society for Applied Microbiology was publishing an article called 'A Germ's Journey' documenting how scientists, teachers and teacher educators worked together, sharing their knowledge freely worldwide, to create a MESHGuide (an online knowledge map/research summary www.meshguides.org) for teachers - to promote personal hygiene and cleanliness and stressing the importance of careful handwashing.

Germs: Health Education/Science for Early Years

Dr Katie Laird and Dr Sarah Younie | [View as single page](#) | [Feedback/Impact](#)

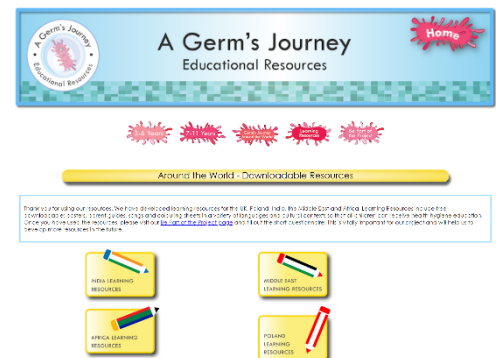


The Germ's Journey MESHGuide reports on the use of interactive resources to teach children about microbiology, hand-hygiene and infection control. The guide demonstrates the need for education in this area, science for young children and how using an integrated interactive approach with specifically designed educational resources can increase children's understanding of handwashing.

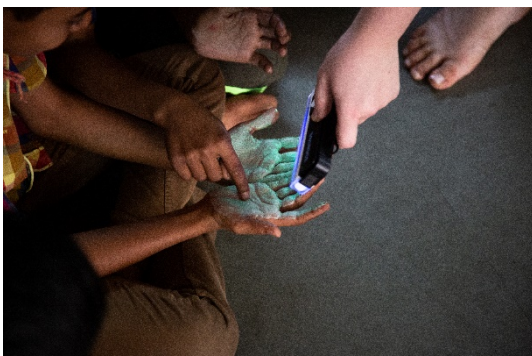
The current outbreak of Coronavirus has sparked the need for a global response to virus containment and personal protection from catching the virus. Already, endless stories are being bounced around social media about how to protect yourself from catching this contagious disease, whilst at the heart of problem is the need to every single person to be more vigilant in washing their hands.

But help for schools, teachers, pupils and parents is already 'at hand' so to speak in the form of two interrelated free resources for practitioners, pupils and parents. The idea for 'A Germ's Journey' came about when microbiologist, Dr. Katie Laird was trying to teach her young son about germs and handwashing and realised that there were very few educational resources available for teaching young children about this topic.

Working in association with Prof Sarah Younie from De Montfort University, Leicester and with MESHGuides (in conjunction with the Education Futures Collaboration charity), a free online resource bank is available giving the most up-to-date research to schools all around the world. The free resources for 'A Germ's Journey' have been launched in a number of different languages for teachers and schools in some of the poorest areas of the world where international aid organisations constantly fight to help wage the war against disease and poverty.



The Germ's Journey MESHGuide links scientific knowledge with teaching practices to provide explanations and interactive resources to teach children about microbiology, hand-hygiene and infection control. The MESHGuide demonstrates the need for education in this area, science for young children and how using an integrated interactive approach with specifically design educational resources can increase children's understanding of handwashing.



Activities include reading the interactive book, playing the web-based games, colouring in germ illustrations, singing a handwashing song, and a handwashing activity, where children are given glow-in-the-dark gel to rub on their

hands. The gel represents germs and reinforces the concept of the invisible germ as they can only see the gel with a UV light. The children then wash their hands to see whether their hands are free from the gel/germs'.

Culturally relevant resources including handwashing posters in a variety of languages, a handwashing song/video and an interactive game have been developed in collaboration with the Thinktank museum, Birmingham.

Funding for the MESHGuides and Germs Journey initiatives has been provided through crowdsourcing, grants from companies, university teacher-training departments and professional organisations internationally. Notably appeals for support to DFID, the DFE and the Wellcome Trust, a major funder of health and education research, have been turned down so educators are working voluntarily with companies and other educators.

'A Germ's Journey' can be found at <http://www.germjourney.com/> and the Germ's Journey article on the Society for Applied Microbiology website - <https://sfam.org.uk/resources/a-germ-s-journey.html>

A Germ's Journey video - <https://youtu.be/QC8WYa20biw>

A Germ's Journey Gujarati Handwashing Song video - <https://youtu.be/yNAQBy4CYh8>

The MESHguide 'Germ's Journey' containing freely available resources and research papers can be found at <http://www.meshguides.org/guides/node/729>

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