



Name: Gregory Crocetti, PhD

Position: Author and Science Educator

Affiliation: Scale Free Network

Location: Melbourne & Brisbane, Australia

Pronouns: He/Him

Please briefly describe your current role in your position

I am co-creating books about microbes and more recently presenting those books to primary and high school students.

What is your terminal and/or current position in academia?

Postdoc

How did you hear about your current position? Was it a career option that you were aware about during your educational process?

While I was still in the lab, I had no awareness or plans to write science education books for children and the general public.

How did you end up working at your current affiliation?

After my last post doc position in 2006, I started collaborating closely with my partner (a Visual Artist) to run art-science workshops, with a central theme to visualise the invisible. Within a few years, I felt frustrated with the small number of students we were able to reach, so decided to start creating books to teach children and adults about some of the amazing things that microbes do in the world around us.

How long have you been working at your current affiliation?

16 years

What type of position is your current job?

Hybrid (Remote & In-Person)

Is your role more a managerial or individual contributor role?

Manager

What are the defined roles of your position?

My official role at Scale Free Network is Director.

What are your day to day tasks that you perform in your position?

Researching content for stories, editing with our writer, storyboarding with our artist, science writing, liaising with publishers, delivering workshops to students.

What do you like best about your job?

Working with creatives.



What do you dislike about your job?

There is very little money in books.

If your job is outside of academia, what is similar and what is different about your current job and your terminal position in academia?

I still read lots of research articles on topics relating to the books we're writing and still write lots of grants.

How did your microbial ecology education prepare you for your current position?

Microbial ecology taught me how to see the hidden ecosystems all around (and inside) us. But academia also taught me how to organise my thoughts and words to write grants and scientific explanations.

What skills do you wish you learned during your educational process that would better prepare you for your current role (e.g. machine learning, management skills, etc.)?

I felt really cheated not to have been exposed to any philosophy or critical thinking during my education. Our current world increasingly looks to scientists and scientific research to make decisions, but with great power comes great responsibility...and I think most scientists would benefit from a stronger grounding in philosophy and ethics.

Do you have any recommendations and/or tips for early career microbial ecologists looking for jobs similar to yours?

Don't assume you're the best person to write or illustrate your stories. There are so many skilled writers and artists out there who are keen to collaborate. But remember, they rarely get paid for their time, so make sure you find a way to pay them for their time and work!!