



LEARNING ACROSS BORDERS GUIDE BOOK

Introduction

Learning Across Borders (LAB) is an educational nonprofit with a program focused on students and educators from various countries in the Asia-Pacific region. At LAB, we are focused on promoting four thematic principles: environmental science, project-based and place-based learning, student leadership, and cross-cultural navigation. Through this program, we aim to transform educational systems to be student-centered, holistic, and hands-on, driven by a network of like-minded educators.

History

LAB was started in 2017 and the first Global LAB was in summer 2018. This program is designed following years of experience creating, planning, and implementing educational programs in the region. It combines the best of the lessons learned from past programs with various new ideas and strategies that will allow for more growth, improvement, and impact.

Structure

LAB is a multinational program with students participating from countries across the Asia-Pacific region. There are two age divisions in the program: Junior (grades 2 - 6, approximately ages 8 - 12) and Senior (grades 7 - 12, approximately ages 13 - 18). Students must present their project exhibition in a team of one or two students. The LAB program is conducted in English.





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Teams

To participate in LAB, a team must be guided by a teacher, registered with the LAB program, and consist of 2 students. While parents and other specialists are encouraged to play an active role in project guidance and mentorship, for registration and logistics purposes, only a teacher can register a team.

Theme

Every year, the LAB program chooses an annual theme for all projects. Once a theme is chosen, a theme document will be released.

Costs

There is no cost to register or participate in regional LABs and all interested participants are encouraged to attend. Travel and ground expenses for the Global LAB are paid for by each participant if they qualify. A select number of scholarships will be available for certain teams invited to the Global LAB.

Overview

LAB is organized in two levels: Regional LABs and a Global LAB. Following regional LABs, qualifying teams will be invited to participate in the Global LAB. The location of the Global LAB will change every year.

Awards

All participants in a LAB will receive an official certificate of participation.

Qualified teams from the regional LABs will be invited to the Global LAB. Participants in the Global LAB will receive certificates, medals, and the experience of a lifetime!

At both levels, a select number of teams and their mentors will receive special certificates recognizing their exceptional research, discussion, and presentation of their project.





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Step-by-Step

1. Topic

The world around us contains so many inspirational and intriguing things. What are you curious about? What confuses you? What makes you want to learn more? While staying relevant to the annual theme, choose a topic that excites you. Focusing on a more specific topic will make the project process more manageable and allow you to become a mini-expert in it.

2. Questions

Before starting your research, begin with a fundamental question that your project will explore. This will frame your work and research process. Don't be worried if your question changes as you do your research. But starting with a clear research question and plan will make your research process much easier and oftentimes more successful.

3. Research

There are so many ways to conduct research and learn about your topic. While library books or reputable online sources can provide background information, to get a deeper understanding you need to go outside! That means visiting museums to see specimens, going into the field to interview locals, or performing your own experiments to obtain primary research. Your teacher and other scientists or experts in the field can serve as vital resources during this time.

4. Analysis

Just collecting data is not enough. We need you to look at your data and think back to your original research questions: what have you learned? What patterns have you observed? Which findings are important and should be shared with others? How can your research be acted upon and used for future work?

5. Report

Participants must write a short process paper and bibliography as relevant to your project. This will serve as an introduction to your project and explain the steps you took and ways you approached your work. These materials will be given to the judges so they can learn about your project.

6. Presentation

This is the most important part - sharing your findings! All participants will create an exhibition that students will first present to judges and then to other teachers and fellow participants. Be proud of all the hard work you've put into your work and show off your newfound knowledge!





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Judging Process

All the official rules for LAB are available in the Rulebook.

Evaluation Process

Students will present their findings to multiple groups of people including other teachers and students, but only the panel of judges will be a part of the evaluation process. The judges may include natural scientists, educators, or other specialists, and will visit each team and listen to their presentation. In addition, they will ask questions to determine the students' understanding of their work, how they undertook their research, and in what ways their project can be impactful. The primary purpose of the judging process is to provide constructive feedback to both students and their mentors on their project. Judges will also award a select number of teams an award for excellent research and presentation.

Criteria

The judges will concentrate their feedback of the project on five criteria:

1. *Quality of Data*: Have students moved beyond basic background research to primary research and their own data collection? Is the data presented and analyzed accurately?
2. *Project Theme*: Does the project theme relate to the annual LAB theme? Have students incorporated this theme into their research and presentation?
3. *Presentation*: Is the presentation effective in terms of content and time? Can students respond to the judges' questions?
4. *Impact*: Is the project impactful or does it restate already known facts? Have students thought of the purpose of such research and the ways it can assist in future efforts?
5. *Overall Approach*: Have students undertaken an analytical, systematic approach to their project? Do students display critical thinking and varied methodology in their work?





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Written Material

Written material includes a title page, process paper, and annotated bibliography. Materials must be submitted electronically prior to the event and teams must provide THREE copies of the materials on the check-in day at all levels of competition.

1. Title Page: A title page is required and should follow the format provided, including the title of the project and registration ID.
2. Process Paper: All entries must include a process paper with four sections of 125 words or less, for each of the following questions:
 - How did you choose your topic?
 - What were your primary ways of collecting research? Please distinguish between primary research and secondary sources.
 - How did you break down the work with your team?
 - What is the most important discovery from your project?
3. Annotated Bibliography: An annotated bibliography is necessary to show the judges what sources you used in your research. The annotations for each source can be up to 50 words and should explain the importance of the source and how it helped you understand your topic. Please limit your bibliography to 10 sources.

**We understand that you may have used many sources or have many thoughts to share with us in your process paper, however part of being a researcher is recognizing what is the most important information and highlighting that. We ask that you similarly focus on the most important sources and thoughts and share that with us to make your story concise and effective.

Schedule

Regional LABS will take place in association with the LAB program and its partners in April and May. The Global LAB will take place in approximately mid-July.

If you have any questions or would like to know more information, please email us at info@thelabprogram.org.

