

ASTROBIOLOGY HOT TOPIC FAIR. D. R. Leach¹, Lakewood High School, PO Box 10, North Lakewood, WA 98259 danileach@lwsd.wednet.edu.

As a high school Astrobiology teacher, I find that by utilizing readily available information, and by giving students direction and structure, the result is a high quality experience and an excitement for the topics in Astrobiology. Students create new products that when shared in and beyond the class become information and builds skills that are long-term and encourages what all of us wants – a love of learning. I have created a research project that I call the Hot Topic Fair that is rigorous, grounded in writing and reading, and exposes the whole class to the fascinating breadth of topics in Astrobiology.

The Hot Topic Fair is an individualized research experience where students not only research but we simulate an astrobiology conference like AbSciCon. Students give an oral presentation and create a poster for the poster session. We invite parents, administrators, and other teachers to come to the poster session and students are enthusiastic as they explain their research topic to others.

Students are responsible for their learning, are given chances to be creative and teach each other, work on public speaking, presenting written material, reading, writing, researching, quality uses for technology, and all within the context of learning many of the key ideas within the science of Astrobiology. This project can be used not only in an Astrobiology course but also in any middle or high school science course.