**Q1) Why do you want to join HLAB? (max. 200 words)**

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping our lives, and I am no exception. Without their guidance, I would not be where I am today. As a result, I have a strong desire to give back and help others achieve their full potential. My experience as a trainer assistant in the Science and Informatics Olympiads sparked my passion for teaching and learning. It taught me the value of breaking down complex topics into simpler concepts to help students better understand and apply them.

My training as a Peer Academic Advisor at Rice University provided me with the skills necessary to connect with students on a deeper level. I understand the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive environment that fosters growth and learning. These experiences have made me more patient, empathetic, and understanding of different perspectives.

Becoming a teacher at HLAB is the perfect opportunity for me to continue my passion for teaching. I am excited about the prospect helping students develop the skills they need to succeed. I believe that my experience and commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of my students make me a strong fit for this role.

**Q2) Please share something that you are passionate about. What motivates and excites you? (max. 250 words)**

“Are you Iñaki??” José asked, surprised to see a high school student. He has two children with Down syndrome and was exhausted from wrestling with Argentina’s health system to get the care his children need. He knew he wasn’t the only parent in this situation with a child with a disability. He had an idea for a solution and was looking for someone to bring it to life.

He had reached out to dozens of anonymous users on an Argentinian blockchain forum, and I was the first to respond. When I heard his story, I was deeply saddened. I was determined to find a way to ensure that all these families received the treatment they needed and to simplify reimbursement, regardless of their geographic location or their socioeconomic situation.

In the two years working with José to develop Reindi, a platform that facilitates access to services for families with children with disabilities. We have interviewed parents like José from all around the country to better understand their situation. We went from brainstorming to a functional, concrete app, currently used by José and his two children, and soon to be tested by ten families, five doctors, and a small insurance firm.

Reindi has taught me the value of technology, not only to solve problems but to connect with people on a deeper level and to understand what is important in their lives. For me, nothing is as fulfilling as building something from scratch, and watching how it positively impacts their lives.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1O2u4rWUP0V1IcvAqMJqGnJpssroezF7H3gD9yLVpuBM/edit>

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**Q3) HLAB strongly believes in the power of peer-mentorship. Deep dialogue between high school students and mentors is essential to creating a powerful peer-mentoring relationship, however not all high school students can communicate freely in English. How would you overcome the language barrier with high school students? (max. 300 words)**

Facilitating discussions across languages barriers can be challenging, especially when students have different levels of proficiency and they might feel self-conscious due to this. However, as a mentor I believe that it's our responsibility to create a safe and respectful environment where students feel comfortable sharing their perspectives and engaging in meaningful dialogue without them being concerned about their English proficiency.

To achieve this, I would start by setting clear ground rules for the discussion, such as respecting each other's opinions, avoiding personal attacks, and actively listening to others. I would also encourage students to share their experiences and perspectives without being concerned about how good their sentence structure or pronunciation might be by putting myself as an example. As an international student from Argentina, my native language is Spanish, so coming to the United States to study was a challenge in terms of adapting to a new culture as well as a new language. I would share with the students my experience navigating school in a different language so they can connect with my struggles and feel more comfortable sharing in class despite their level of proficiency.

In addition, I would make sure to acknowledge and validate the efforts of students by constantly praising them and giving positive feedback, which would create an environment free from judgement. By doing so, I hope to foster a culture of open-mindedness and understanding, where students can learn from each other and grow in their understanding of complex issues while their practice their English.

Finally, I would be open and flexible in my approach, adapting to the needs and dynamics of the particular group of students I'm working with. Whether that means providing additional resources or adjusting the discussion format, I would do my best to ensure that everyone feels heard and respected.