Inspiration for CLEC 2027 Session Proposals!

Attendees of the 2026 Clinical Laboratory Educators Conference were provided with the opportunity to suggest session topics and ideas for future meetings. An analysis of these suggestions is summarized below.

The collected ideas focused on **strengthening health science and clinical laboratory education programs** by improving student engagement, instructional quality, program sustainability, and workforce readiness. A strong emphasis is placed on **engaging Gen Z learners**, maintaining **academic integrity**, and supporting students holistically while also protecting faculty well-being and preventing burnout.

Many topics center on **innovative teaching strategies**, including flipped classrooms, simulations, AI-enabled learning, affordable and practical laboratory activities, molecular diagnostics instruction, and creative assessment methods. Suggestions for **practical, real-world teaching applications** rather than purely theoretical discussions, especially in clinical and laboratory settings, were mentioned.

Another major focus is **program growth, recruitment, and retention**, including attracting prospective students, retaining students through graduation and into the workforce, converting biology majors into CLS programs, and increasing administrative buy-in and funding. Ideas such as dual enrollment, summer camps, pipeline partnerships, consortium models, and community-based CTE implementation highlight a strong interest in **early exposure and outreach**.

Program leadership and sustainability were repeatedly highlighted, with topics addressing **succession planning, continuity planning, accreditation, assessment, continuous improvement, grant writing, and faculty workload balance**. These ideas reflect concern about staffing shortages, particularly in microbiology and clinical labs, and the long-term viability of programs when key personnel leave.

Finally, there is strong interest in **future-focused skills**, especially the role of **AI in both education and clinical laboratories**, online and virtual simulations, interprofessional education (IPE), and preparation for certification exams and evolving workforce demands.

<u>Individual responses</u>

- Sessions geared toward those teaching in Master's and Doctoral Programs – needs of students, support, etc.
- Tips on making videos for classroom.
- Inspiring Gen Z.
- Convincing students to slow down and really take in their educational experience, and not just get the work done as quickly as possible.
- Dealing with cheating another integrity issues.
- Handling student personal problems, illness, and drama while keeping them on track, and maintaining your own sanity.
- Overcoming burnout
- connecting with your students after you are now an "old" person in their eyes
- recruitment ideas
- Implementation of CTE in the community
- dual enrollment programs
- education grant writing for community programs
- Improving the number of prospective students.
- Subject related teaching tip classes
- High school students taking MLT courses and similar programs
- Classroom engagement
- Knowledge retention among students
- Affordable student labs that drive knowledge
- Student engagement with difficult subjects
- Managing student behaviors in a balanced way
- advocating for our programs. How to increase Administration buy in to our programs.
- Assessment strategies
- techniques for teaching younger generations of students

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- AI and virtual learning
- Simulations
- Summer Camps for building interest in younger generations
- Sustainability of Program Directors (addressing burnout)
- How is AI used in the clinical lab. What knowledge and new skills do our students need to be competitive in the job market, and will these be incorporated into program standards?
- Ideas for flipped classrooms.
- Aligning course activities with SLO's.
- Programs that balance different modalities to get to the same degrees at the same time
- Converting 'Bio' students into CLS students before they get a BS
- Sessions to help with clinical affiliates
- Simulation on a budget
- Practical chemistry student labs that aren't just another spectrophotometer lab.
- More simulation techniques.
- More sessions on keeping students engaged.
- More topics pertaining to MLT education programs.
- Succession planning for program directors.
- Rewards for clinical site instructors.
- Incentives to retain students in jobs after graduation.
- Information on successful consortium programs and other unique ways programs are getting support to continue.
- Developing a program continuity plan to ensure program stability and protect students if a program director, key leaders, or faculty depart.
- More IPE ideas.
- How to monitor and act on Continuous Improvement ideas.
- Anything to do with Phlebotomy
- Continuing to address the microbiology laboratory clinical shortage
- Need for increasing online laboratory simulations and continued impact of interprofessional education on lab programs/students.
- More on program assessment
- Crash course in theory, course construction, assignment creation, statistical grading.
- Exam review for retention techniques
- Techniques for writing/generating exam and review questions, and review materials outside of traditional study guides.
- More seminars on engaging with students in the clinical laboratory as opposed to in the classroom.
- Specific teaching approaches and techniques (real life examples)
- Teaching concepts in the view of MLS
- program director specific content
- addressing advantages of continuing education (MA to PhD or EdD case studies)
- smaller instructional techniques that I can easily incorporate into my teaching.
- AI is huge and I would love to hear more about that as it is quickly developing and expanding.
- How instructors balance their workload with teaching and creating or implementing new tools.
- More student classroom project ideas, laboratory exercises, etc.
- How to stay current and "beat" AI in the laboratory and classroom
- How other programs are meeting the accreditation standards.
- Tips for programs with a small number of faculty, especially for making impactful changes.
- Anything related to funding opportunities and grants
- Molecular Diagnostics teaching tips.
- Discussion on how to balance work on advanced degree (EdD/PhD/DCLS) while teaching/working full time.
- Types of review sessions or assessments that are used to prepare students for end of program and certification exams.