



## JILL CLEVELAND

“Futurelab+ provides us with a robust curriculum that we can integrate into our classrooms and connects us with a network of teachers to support our professional development, which is truly valuable.”

## KERIN COFFEY

“The curriculum is there, you can use it as a full curriculum or you can find ways to adapt and pick pieces out and make it work for what you already do in your classroom.”

## GIL GOMEZ

“It is so different from ‘here’s the book,’ which we don’t even have. It’s all free flowing and real world applications that the kids can take from here.”

Between the three of them, Kerin, Gil, and Jill teach an array of biomedical classes to 9th through 12th graders at Eastside High School in Lancaster, California. They talk about their classes, their students, and teaching in general with pride and passion. So much so that it might tempt the listener into considering teaching themselves. All of them are seasoned teachers whose love for teaching science is grounded in its hands-on nature and real world relevance. “It’s so different from ‘here’s the book,’ which we don’t even have. It’s all free flowing and real world applications that the kids can take from here.” says Gil. The others agree. Science, and biotechnology specifically, is exciting.

The trio applied to [Futurelab+](#) in 2022, to enhance their teaching by bringing industry knowledge, skills, and connections into their own professional development and into the classrooms with students. They say that being a part of the program has been incredibly valuable for three main reasons—the flexible curriculum, the access to industry professionals, and the network of teachers.

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# Implement Flexible Lessons

The *Futurelab+ curriculum* is full of lessons, labs, and case studies that teachers can pick from and easily integrate into their classrooms. “The curriculum is there, you can use it as a full curriculum or you can find ways to adapt and pick pieces out and make it work for what you already do in your classroom,” says Jill. The three admitted they felt a little intimidated upon first reviewing the curriculum, especially since they are not specifically teaching biotech. But after participating in focus groups to discuss lessons with industry professionals and other teachers in the Futurelab+ community,

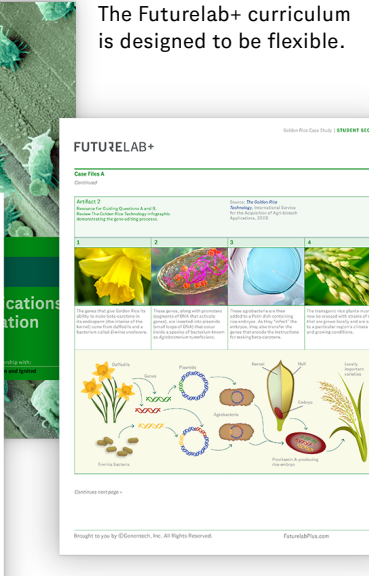
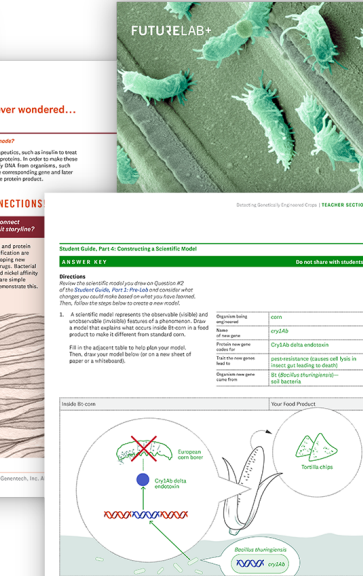
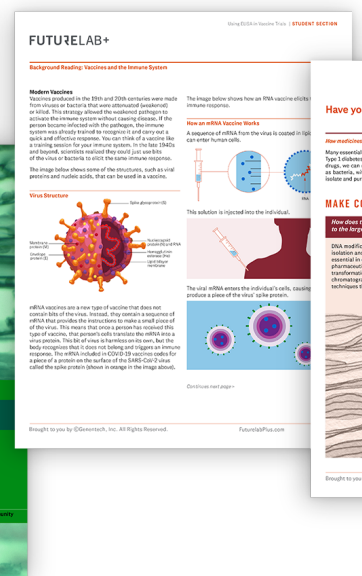
things clicked and they realized all of the ways they could use the curriculum in their different classrooms. Jill and Kerin recently met to plan for a lab they will do with their respective 9th, 11th, and 12th grade classes. The idea is to revisit the lab and lesson with a different lens, scaffold the learning, and take it a little further each time. The Futurelab+ set up—a curriculum that is designed and refined in partnership with industry leaders and teachers—contributes to lessons that are continuously evolving to keep up with the times and meet different teacher’s needs.

# Access Industry Professionals

When your primary goal is to ensure that your students are learning the necessary skills to be successful after high school, hearing directly from biotech professionals about the skills they use daily to do their jobs is incredibly valuable. “The connection to Genentech employees has been huge. I felt like I wasn’t sure if I was going down the right route and providing students what they needed to be ready for college and career. I needed someone to validate [what I was doing] as important,” says Kerin. Being able to talk with industry professionals through the program

has provided the teachers with the affirmation and confidence they were hoping for. And given that Lancaster is a bit of a biotech desert, as Jill puts it, they weren’t sure where else they could get this type of partnership if not for Futurelab+. Kerin, Gil, and Jill are excited for their students to benefit from this partnership and hope to have *Genentech employees speak to their classes*.

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The Futurelab+ curriculum is designed to be flexible.

“Just the exposure to help students realize this job actually exists. We hear all the time, ‘I didn’t know I could do that,’” says Gil. Futurelab+ validates what the students are learning, exposes them to different opportunities, and helps them learn about how their classwork connects to careers they could explore in the future.

A Tight Network of Teachers

Being a teacher can sometimes be isolating work where you’re often thinking through lesson plans alone. But with Futurelab+, one has a network of teachers to learn from, bounce ideas

off of, and turn to for support. “There is an emphasis on the cohort and building a community. It’s always valuable to have more people in the trenches with you,” says Jill. The teachers that make up the network are a diverse group. Some have taught biotech previously, many haven’t. They teach all different types of science classes, from marine biology to anatomy. And the group continues to grow with a new cohort each year. Kerin, Gil, and Jill say that this growing diverse network of teachers all implementing the curriculum, coming together to discuss it, and share best practices or lessons learned, sparks great encouragement and inspiration.

To anyone asking, the three would say, “this is the BEST professional development program that we’ve gone through in our careers.” Not only do they describe the trainings as well organized, purposeful, and engaging, there is a clear sense of reinvigoration in their teaching and gained confidence. “I was starting to feel stagnant in what I was doing. This has injected energy into my approach. I know that having the peer network and meeting industry professionals and having new viewpoints on the curriculum to approach things, that alone has reenergized us and the kids are benefiting from it,” says Jill.

Teacher Information

Experience	7 Years Combined
Grades	9, 10, 11, 12
Subjects	Principles of Biomedical Science, Human Body Systems, Medical Interventions, Biomedical Innovations, AP Biology

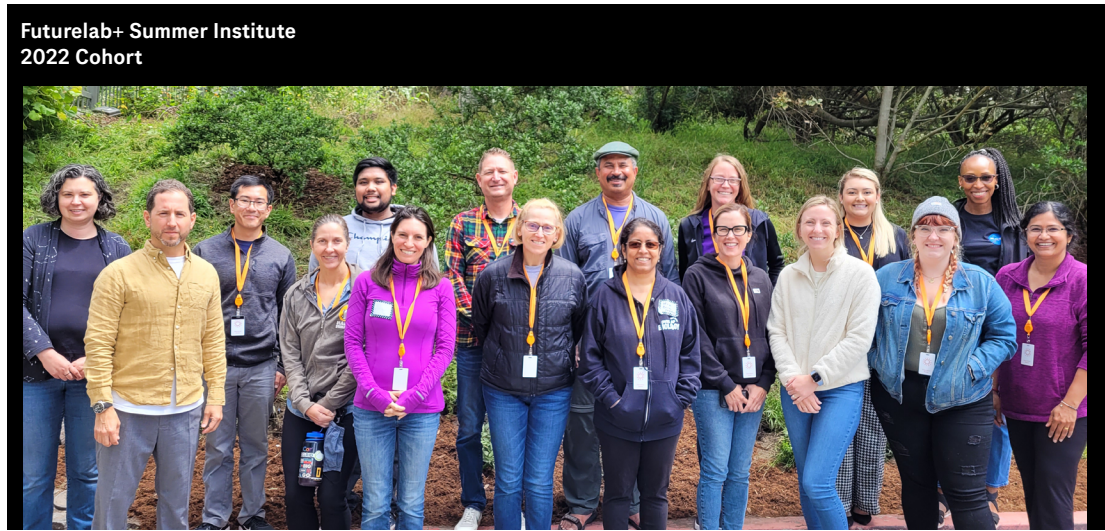
School Information\*

Name	Eastside High School
City	Lancaster, California
Enrollment	2,744 Students
Title 1	Yes

Key Student Demographics\*

Ethnicity	65% Hispanic or Latino; 23% Black or African American
Free Lunch (FRL)	73%
English Learners	12%

\* Based on 2021-22 data: <http://www.ed-data.org/school/Los-Angeles/Antelope-Valley-Union-High-Eastside-High>



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For more about Futurelab+ and the Biotech Summer Institute, go to <https://www.igniteducation.org/futurelabplus/>

For questions, contact Emily at [edilger@igniteducation.org](mailto:edilger@igniteducation.org)