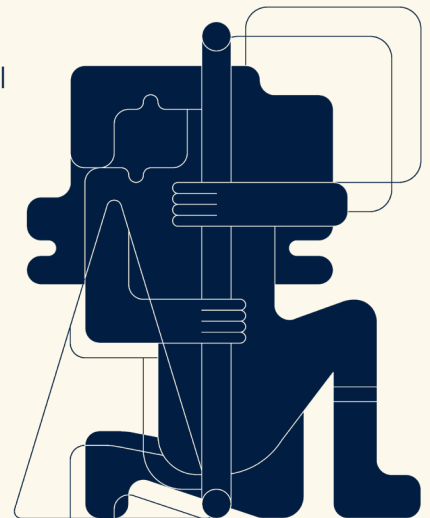


WHAT IS THE FUTURES CANTINA?

The future belongs to all of us, and should support, sustain, and nourish all of us. The diversity, talents, and leadership within our school communities, and the funders who support innovations and empower educators of all kinds, are key to dreaming and implementing new futures. We can — and must — design and invent new ways to serve students and communities, now and in the future.

The Futures Cantina is a space to do that: time travel, dream, create and connect. At SXSWEDU, the Futures Cantina was a meeting room transformed into a futuristic imagination zone. Our Cantina included immersive stations to explore the future of learning and experiential workshops where educators could imagine and build the future of learning together.

All of the experiences, whether learning stations or workshops, were designed to equip communities with varying approaches to imagine, build and test the future of learning with and for their communities. This brief provides a short overview of the experience we designed for SXSWEDU and its initial impact.



IMMERSIVE STATIONS AT SXSWEDU

ChatGPT

Attendees prompted ChatGPT with questions about education and compared the AI's answers to their own. They reflected on whether ChatGPT made them hopeful or fearful for the future.

Cave Paintings

Participants reflected on the messages they wanted their descendants to receive and understand. To convey those messages, they used fabric and rubber stamps to create "cave paintings" for future archaeologists to discover and decipher.

Trendcasting

Attendees read through potential future scenarios, choosing one that seemed connected to their observations of the world and a second that seemed expansive. They brought those futures to life by composing headlines from the future for each scenario.

Metaverse with VATOM

Attendees explored a metaverse space with educational activities (e.g. a ferris wheel for physics and a musical garden). They spoke and asked questions to a live, real 3D designer who works on the metaverse.

EXPERIENTIAL WORKSHOPS

Seeing the Stars in Your Streets led by Reinvention Lab

Participants imagined what the future of learning means for their corner of the world. Then, they designed a custom sneaker to represent that vision.

Liberatory Ed, the Ujima Era with AfroRithms led by AfroRithms from the Future

“Ujima” means “collective work and responsibility,” and represents shared agency toward the future. Participants played AfroRithms from the Future, a game centering Black and Indigenous viewpoints where players explore possible futures.



The Martian School Experiment led by the Stanford d.school

Participants embarked on interplanetary travel, designing a school on Mars while questioning invisible principles underlying our current system (architecture, curriculum, etc.) They imagined what school could be if the focus were on creating learning conditions designed for long-term thriving.

Flights in futures led by the d.school and be radical

Where do popular images of the future come from? What ideas do they carry? Participants tackled these questions through a game that involves deconstructing popular images of the future and remixing them to create new stories of possibility.

Futures by Chance, Futures by Choice led by ASU Center for Science and Imagination

Teams of 4-6 project events onto a timeline that begins today and ends 50 years in the future. Used to create future visions for Smithsonian labs and museums, this collaborative game aims to expand students' futures consciousness.

CANTINA IMPACT

SXSW volunteers captured attendance data for 609 unique attendees, and 754 total scans (meaning folks stopped by more than once!) Because volunteers were not always available, we estimate attendance numbers were notably higher.

Attendees were seeking out — and grateful for — hands-on making opportunities, extra space for envisioning the future of education, and a venue that encouraged authentic discussion and networking with peers. Attendees said they had been eager to think about the future of education, whether broadly or in relation to a particular trend like generative AI, but had not previously had the opportunity. U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona stopped by the final party to speak and experience our silver tree sculpture covered in educators' dreams for the future.

