

Education, Creativity & Community - What I Learned at SXSW EDU

Last month I attended SXSW EDU in Austin, Texas. It's from the same family of festivals/events that brings us the big SXSW music festival. This was my first time attending and it probably won't be my last. The conference was probably more diverse than anything else that I attend. In general, the content was at the broad intersection of education, creativity, and community. Participants and speakers were from K-12, higher ed, non-profits, corporations, teachers, administrators, students, vendors, etc. primarily from the US, but also global. <https://www.sxsw.edu.com/>

I compiled this list of the takeaways that I've been pondering the most since the conference. If you have any questions or want to talk about this further, let me know. I'm happy to chat.

Artificial intelligence is being adopted in education much more slowly than in other industries. There is potential to use AI in multiple ways in education:

- Learner-facing (e.g., adaptive learning platforms)
- Teacher-facing (e.g., advanced learning analytics dashboards or automated assessment)
- System-facing (e.g., prioritizing school inspections to deploy human inspectors to settings that are in greatest need)

Nesta, an education foundation in the UK, researched the future of artificial intelligence in schools and colleges. The report, *Educ-AI-tion Rebooted?* outlines a future for AI in schools that maximizes benefits while minimizing risks.

<https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/education-rebooted/>

Recommended book: *The Big Nine: How the Tech Titans & Their Thinking Machines Could Warp Humanity*
by Amy Webb

There is potential for libraries to harness artificial intelligence to help our patrons and our communities. We need to be thoughtful about our goals, our opportunities, and the policies we put in place to minimize risk.

Preparing students for the learning economy means preparing them to be self-regulated learners. The successful people will be those who know how to change and adapt, not necessarily those who know the most. The president of Goucher College, José Antonio Bowen, framed the new 3 R's as Relationships, Resilience, and Reflection.

Makerspaces in K-12 settings have great potential to foster learning, but also risk having cultural and gender barriers that limit inclusion. A national study of K-12 makerspaces in urban settings found that participation by girls and boys was nearly equal in K-8 grades, but by high school was predominantly male. Male students outnumbered female three to one, program leaders were predominantly male, and language used in instruction and recruitment showed gender bias. The report offers recommendations to support student learning by all students in makerspaces. <https://drexel.edu/excite/engagement/learning-innovation/making-culture-report>

Design thinking was mentioned a lot at the conference and I'm hearing it more on our campus. This process for creative problem solving uses empathy and experimentation to solve problems.

Recommended resource: *A Virtual Crash Course in Design Thinking* from Stanford University's d.school. <https://dschool.stanford.edu/resources-collections/a-virtual-crash-course-in-design-thinking>

Augmented reality and virtual reality were visible in the presentations and at the vendor expo. Eric Hawkinson and colleagues at Kyoto University are doing research on the use of augmented reality in higher education. <http://erichawkinson.com>

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