

West Valley community gets preview of Dreamscape Learn's immersive biology, chemistry lessons

A permanent VR-assisted classroom opens on the West Valley campus this fall

By Mariana Lozovanu, ASU News
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About 100 faculty, students and community members gathered at Arizona State University's West Valley campus to step inside a new kind of classroom — one powered by virtual reality, storytelling and hands-on discovery.

The [Dreamscape Learn](#) mobile pod, showcased on campus, offered a preview of immersive, story-driven science lessons that will soon become a permanent part of the West Valley learning experience.

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Set to officially [launch this fall](#) inside the campus' new academic and administration building, the Dreamscape Learn classroom will allow students to explore complex biology and chemistry concepts through cinematic virtual environments, transforming traditional lab work into interactive, investigative missions.

The experience places students in the role of field scientists and investigators. In one featured chemistry lesson, participants analyze a polar bear hair sample and a mysterious substance, applying what they know about atoms, isotopes and molecular bonding to track a cybercriminal.

The approach blends scientific rigor with narrative engagement, helping students connect theory to real-world problem-solving.

For students, the impact was immediate.

“I experienced Dreamscape Learn for the first time — we did a chemistry module, and it was so much fun,” psychology student Jaidyn Niccum said. “I actually felt like I was there, and I retained so much information.”

Ryan de la Rosa, an education major at ASU, emphasized the platform’s potential to support different learning styles.

“The experience here was great — it felt very hands-on and explained everything in depth,” de la Rosa said. “I think it’s especially helpful for students who may not be ready to grasp large concepts in a traditional classroom. It helps translate more abstract ideas into something tangible.”

AJ Branstetter, a forensic science student, also highlighted the real-world connection of the experience.

“We did a chemistry module, and it was a super cool experience,” Branstetter said. “I was able to grasp what I was doing firsthand. It felt like a real-world experience where the things you’re learning can actually be applied.”

Faculty and staff shared similar enthusiasm.

“As a former science major, I remember large classes where many students would lose interest,” said Lindy Baker, assistant director of records and enrollment services. “This is different. It brings investigation into learning, and it’s easier to absorb information when you’re interested.”

While virtual reality is a key entry point, faculty emphasize that the learning extends far beyond the headset.

“A lot of people think the experience is just putting on a headset for a few minutes and going on an adventure,” said Michael Angilletta, associate dean and President’s Professor with EdPlus at ASU. “But it’s much richer than that. After the VR experience, students spend hours analyzing data they collected or working with physical samples from the story. The narrative drives the learning across both the VR and classroom experience.”

The West Valley preview marks the first time the campus community has engaged with Dreamscape Learn’s mobile classroom ahead of its permanent installation. ASU currently operates Dreamscape Learn labs at its Tempe and Polytechnic campuses, as well as at Mesa’s MIX Center.

By bringing immersive education to the West Valley, ASU continues to support regional growth and workforce development, positioning the area as a hub for innovation and opportunity. The initiative reflects ASU’s broader commitment to expanding access to innovative learning tools and preparing students for in-demand careers in science and technology.

From mobile pod to classroom experience

“We’re very excited because, come fall, there’s going to be a physical installation at the West Valley campus — not just on a bus, but in a classroom,” said Lisa Flesher, chief of Realm 4 initiatives. “We’re excited to bring this content to our students, starting with introductory biology and chemistry courses.”

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Peer mentor students prepare to enter the Dreamscape Learn mobile pod on ASU's West Valley campus, welcomed by John VandenBrooks, associate dean for immersive learning at EdPlus at ASU. Photo by Richard Holland/ASU

Text image(s)



Lisa Flesher
Chief of Realm 4 initiatives
Dreamscape Learn