

CLASSROOM INNOVATION IN FINLAND AND ESTONIA

March 20 - 30, 2025

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS



\$3900 per person sharing
\$3600 Early Bird
Single room is an additional \$550

Technology is moving apace; in fact, it's accelerating. Increasingly, prospective employers of high school and university graduates ask for new types of "literacy" and problem solving – paramount among these is computer literacy. This global professional development opportunity focuses on coding, gaming & robotics – CGR. Educators who take part will acquire the perspectives necessary to leverage CGR for ideal student outcomes. The trip will position you to encourage your students' natural interest in coding, gaming and robotics. You will use your new knowledge to support your students' use of these tools. Embedding CGR in your curriculum will catalyze your students' critical thinking – and their access to high-quality university experiences & job prospects as young professionals.

During the four day professional learning experience, we explore best practices in modern teaching and presentations on modern teacher training approaches from teacher training universities. Our learning will also focus on the relevance of future learning as an alternate model of education delivery – and its significance as a concept that incorporates certain societal trends, embedding them into national policy. The 'future learning and leadership' model can itself effect change, and influence future trends in business and across the economic sectors. There is an opportunity to learn about Finland and Estonia, to approach to the use of media and visuals, navigating learning in hyper-digital environment. Conversation around the all-important topic of media literacy and how widespread is the Finnish, and the process of implementing it in curriculum practice, including the type and extent of teacher training in media literacy.

On Monday in Helsinki we'll "set the table" with a dialogue on Finnish national education policy – then over the course of the subsequent 4 working days in Finland and Estonia we'll make school visits tailored to the needs of all three levels – early years middle years and high school. We'll also discuss & observe vocational education special-needs education the importance of play and teacher training. And we'll shine a light on coding gaming & robotics. Our 4-day PD is divided into two activities: workshops and presentations at local universities through the department of education. Here the workshop focuses on Finnish education – specifically on the process of Finnish teacher training how Finnish teachers design and deliver lessons. Workshops throughout will include visuals with tips and strategies for enabling your faculty's classrooms for STEM especially around coding and robotics. Slide presentations and lesson plans from workshops are shared with your faculty they can use these plans to create coding activities in their own classrooms. Activities include learning how to teach coding to children with a Bee-bot strategies to encourage young children's participation in the coding process.



CURRICULUM INNOVATION THROUGH CODING, GAMING & ROBOTICS

The main theme of this 9-day spring course is: "Curriculum innovation through coding, gaming and robotics". Through classroom observations and wide-ranging dialogue with colleague-educators in both countries, we will explore pedagogical technique, teacher training and the embedding of 21st Century technology in the curriculum.

IN FINLAND

In Finland, we will spend a day at a university in the nation's central region, where research is ongoing around gaming & robotics – and their productive application to the education sector. We will explore how teachers can incorporate game design and production, game programming, game graphics and game sounds in curriculum. What's more, game design, makers-spaces, and digital playful solutions form part of Finland's rigorous approach to teacher training. The overall objective is for US educators to develop new curricula that use gaming & robotics platforms to encourage students' critical thinking skills and entrepreneurial instincts.



IN ESTONIA

In Estonia, we will focus on coding. Estonia's parliament has recently passed legislation requiring that coding be taught from first grade. We will discuss with policymakers why Estonia chose to require coding in the early years, and we'll observe – and learn from – students in real time. Some US states, such as Arkansas and Washington, offer coding in the classroom, with measurably positive results – but few require these disciplines from the early years.

Certain NGOs, notably, Code.org, a Seattle-based champion for coding-in-the classroom, support states in their efforts. Our conversations and observations in Estonia will shape our perspectives as we head back to our own states.

Importantly, coding researchers and advocates have found, students are having fun learning to code! They are also finding that there's equal interest across gender, racial, income, and geographic lines – students from all demographics are beginning to code, and gaining academic confidence.



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ALTERRA GLOBAL INITIATIVES

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

During our 9-day course, delegates will explore why Finland and Estonia lead the way, how they deploy CGR in elementary and secondary curricula, how they measure success, and why they consider CGR-embedding to be of the utmost importance. We'll make classroom visits, hold roundtable chats with Education Ministry officials, and learn from the students themselves! By week's end, we'll prepare to return to the US with a wealth of new ideas for curriculum integration, for your own growth as an educator, and for how you may support all of your students! We will dialogue with academics, students, families and activists. We will visit world-famous historical & cultural sites. And we'll get involved in the hectic everyday life of modern Helsinki and Tallinn. You will not want to miss this professional opportunity!





PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Early Bird Price: \$3600 per person (single room is an additional \$550) before August 1, 2024, and subject to availability.

Regular Price: \$3900 per person (single room is an additional \$550) after August 1, 2024, or subject to availability.

REGISTRATION OPENS ON MAY 1, 2024

Payment Schedule:

Registration Opens on May 1 & Deposit Due Upon Registration | \$500

Second Payment | September 1, 2024 | \$1000

Third Payment | October 14, 2024 | \$1000

Final Payment | January 7, 2025 | \$1100 (Early Bird)

Insurance details are found [here](#). \$1400 (Regular)

Cost Includes

- Airfare from Chicago to Helsinki
- Registration for 4-days of professional development, to include seminars/workshops, discussions, working visits to schools/universities
- Programming, honoraria, university and school-visit fees (Monday-Thursday)
- 9 nights' shared luxury accommodation
- Daily breakfasts
- 4 lunches (Monday - Thursday)
- Daily transfers to and from all meetings and professional events (Monday - Thursday)
- Orientation and a city tour of Helsinki and Estonia

Optional inclusions at an additional cost:

Finland

Welcome Dinner; \$40

Saturday: Tour of Porvoo, including English speaking guide and transportation; \$100

Sunday: Tour of Suomenlinna, English speaking guide and transportation; \$75

Estonia

Saturday: Lahemaa National Park, including English speaking guide, transportation and lunch; \$100

[Register here](#)