

Bedford-Copenhagen Learning Exchange

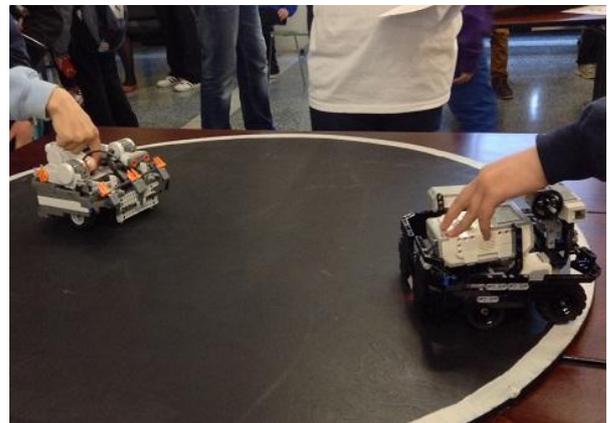
Visit: November 2017

Innokas!



Innokas is a network that promotes technology in education in Finland. It was founded approximately ten years ago in one school, in Espoo. The city decided that they wanted to provide in-service training for teachers and the Mayor created learning centres for schools. Within one of these schools Kati, one of the founders of Innokas, was tasked with running the first Technology Education Centre (TEC). The role of the TEC was to provide training to in-service teachers training within Espoo. This quickly spread and a network was built from the original.

Already a quickly growing organisation, a large research project kept Innokas at the forefront of technology in education within Finland. Now a team of four, Innokas started to widen their network. In 2014 the network had become so wide that the University of Helsinki became their new home. This meant that regional coordinators could be identified in ten different areas of



Finland: Espoo, Turku, Tampere, Jyväskylä, Kontiolahti, Kuopio, Lappeenranta, Larsmo, Oulu and Rovaniemi. The Innokas team could lead on training for educators spanning the country as well as contribute to several research projects funded by the government. The reach of the Innokas network grew and they were able to offer a more extensive level of support and now the Innokas network 'organises events, professional development programs, and consultation for teachers, as well as provides information about the network in conferences and other events.' (Innokas, 2017).

Some research is international through working with countries such as China and Stanford University in the USA. The aim of Global Innokas network activity is to extend the development of the Innovative School and the sharing of knowledge across national borders. Following the Finnish Innokas Network model, Global Innokas network builds on the principles of grass-roots collaboration between participating schools and networks and the versatile use of technology. Some training has taken place in these countries too, however this is minimal as Innokas is not a profit making organisation. Training is also available via MOOC, further expanding the reach of Innokas.



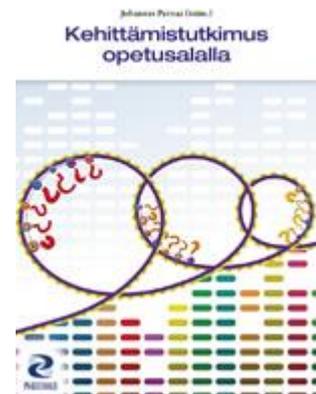
Another key achievement of the Innokas network is the creation of a network of teacher education departments between several cities. Previously each city department would carry out their own training, but now the Innokas network have brought these cities together to share best practice, ideas and standardise the approaches taken by each University.

Exhibitions and conferences are a common activity for the Innokas team. They are often used to provide advice for teaching and learning as well as technology products that schools can use to meet their own needs.

As well as in-service training for new teachers Innokas are able to provide workshops for existing staff, ensuring that teachers are able to use the latest pedagogies with children. Training can range from one day workshops, to a series of sessions. Examples include 3d printing, coding and robots. The majority of projects are funded by the Finnish government, but schools can also buy training sessions from Innokas. It is worth noting that the money

generated from each Innokas session goes directly to the teachers delivering the workshops (the ten regional coordinators).

Everything that Innokas does is research and evidence based. In 2014 they started to gather data, which is currently being analysed, to assess the impact of their work. The data is largely qualitative and measures how teachers feel about using technology and the new associated pedagogies. Impressive quantitative data is available to measure reach of the project to date; To date 164 cities have used Innokas to develop their teachers.



Finnish teachers are required to have two training days per year. Often these are selected by the teachers themselves, which serves as an excellent recommendation for the Innokas network as so many teachers choose to attend their training and workshops.

What is unique about the Innokas network is that it develops its training and pedagogies alongside children, bringing them in as co-researchers and co-developers and this ideology is shared with students, teachers, school administrators and other stakeholders, who are encouraged to be creative and innovative using available technology and to use the expertise of the children to help develop these skills and pedagogies.



“We encourage kids and adults to come up together with new ways to make use of technology in everyday school life.”

(Innokas, 2017)