

EDUCATION NEWS

## Lane Tech students get sample of summer coding workshop

By Esther Castillojo | Apr 19, 2015, 1:05pm CDT



Lane Tech students participate in a coding workshop by The Flatiron School. | Supplied photo

Flying drones and learning how to build websites and apps are just a few of the things Chicago teenagers could learn this summer.

These skills are all part of the curriculum for Flatiron School's summer coding workshop slated to start this June at the offices of technology startup hub 1871 in the Merchandise Mart.

“Every industry is now a tech industry: fashion, finance, media, the public and social sectors, medicine and law. They’re all being transformed by a certain set of technologies and those are the technologies that we teach,” said Lyle Resner, the director of Flatiron’s pre-college program.

Code is a set of instructions that tells a computer how to work.



The New York-based academy — which has adult and pre-college programs in its main location and is working to bring its pre-college program to Chicago — will be giving four, two-week coding sessions to students ages 13 to 18. Each session costs \$2,000 with a few scholarships available.

“Kids see the same program as the adults do in the New York school, but at a faster pace,” Resner said. “They’re going through as much material as our adults.”

Chicago is Flatiron’s first venture outside of New York, a move they hope to make permanent by working with schools in the city.

“We’re looking for a select number of schools to partner with, and we’ve talked to a few schools,” Resner said. “We’re open to working with anyone who sees and understands the value of this type of education, and we’re committed to helping as many kids as possible.”

About 30 Lane Tech College Prep students got a taste of Flatiron’s program during a workshop Thursday.

Breaking stereotypes and blowing minds were two of the main takeaways.

“When people think of coding, they think about someone alone in a room but that’s actually not true — you have to work in a collaborative group, you have to talk and discuss your ideas,” said Colleen Masterson, 17.

The students, most of whom were in introductory-level computer science classes, even got to fly a drone using code. Masterson was the first to raise her hand to do it.

“It felt really cool. I worked on a project like that before, but I’d never actually seen the programming behind it,” she said.

Students at Lane Tech, 2501 W. Addison St., are not strangers to coding, they’ve been learning these skills as part of the school’s computer science major.

“It’s like art and computer science at the same time. Since it’s relatively new compared to other fields, there’s so much you can do with it,” said Dylan Haughewald, 16.

Coding is part of Lane Tech’s computer science curriculum, which lets students graduate with six computer science classes under their belts.

“A lot of the opportunities, they would typically have to wait until they go to college to get them. They have a true college experience in high school now,” Lane Tech Assistant Principal Damir Ara said.

Lane Tech's maker spaces, workshops, labs and classes have all been created in the last couple of years, Ara said. The school has about 800 students in the computer science department.

Instructor David Hayes said computer science courses should be widely available.

"Every young person should have the chance to find out whether they have the interest and the aptitude for this field before they leave high school," he said.

"Every kid deserves the chance because, in the 21st century, no matter what field you're in, the tools of computer science are how we solve problems," he said.