Constructionism 2018
Constructionism, computational thinking and educational innovation
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CS Unplugged and Computational thinking

The CS Unplugged activities (csunplugged.org) provide a scaffolding for a constructivist approach to introducing topics in computer science, without the need to learn programming first. It has been widely used to support Computational Thinking in school curricula. This talk reviews research into how effective the Unplugged approach is in education by surveying evaluations of interventions using Unplugged, and relating it to the (many!) definitions of Computational Thinking. While there is evidence for the value of an Unplugged approach for teaching students, we will look at broader applications, including supporting teachers who are new to the subject, and using it in integrated learning where computational thinking is exercised as part of other curriculum areas.

About speaker

Tim Bell is a professor in the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering at the University of Canterbury. His "Computer Science Unplugged" project is being widely used internationally with the supporting materials (books and videos) having been translated into over 20 languages. Tim has received many awards for his work in computing education including the ETH (Zurich) ABZ International Honorary Medal for Fundamental Contributions in Computer Science Education (in 2013) and the 2018 ACM SIGCSE Outstanding Contribution to Computer Science Education award. Since 2008 he has been actively involved in the design and deployment of teaching Digital Technologies in New Zealand schools.