

Missouri “MoManufacturingWINS” Program Using Tooling U-SME Online Training Is a Model for Other States

Missouri is leading the way when it comes to building a skilled workforce to meet the needs of large and small manufacturers in the state. This effort has been propelled by a four-year U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) grant awarding \$15 million to fund “MoManufacturingWINS” through September 2016. This statewide training network is creating opportunities for Missourians to obtain the training they need to work in modern manufacturing shops.

The collaborative nature of the initiative – it’s implemented by a nine-member consortium of public two-year colleges – along with its emphasis on the use of technology, including Tooling U-SME online training, is a model for other states across the nation.

“As in other parts of the country, Missouri is challenged to find a workforce to fill critical manufacturing positions,” said Dawn Busick, MoHealthWINS and MoManufacturingWINS Project Director. “The grant allows us to recruit and train thousands of dislocated workers in a variety of innovative ways.”

Moving away from a traditional job-training approach, the curriculum and structure has created an education model that establishes career pathways to fill employer needs for workers with specific skills covering four occupational clusters: Production, Industrial Maintenance, Welding and Machining.

The training innovations include:

- Accelerated instruction by moving from semester-based programs to modularized training and stacked credentials that allow students to get short-term training for now that can be applied as credit hours to an overall degree long-term.
- Industry-recognized credentials certification endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers such as the National Career Readiness Certificate, The National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) and the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) that validate students’ mastery of skills in specific areas of manufacturing.
- Incorporation of more online and hybrid training to make it easier for busy adults.



Two Precision Machining Technology students are hard at work as part of the MoManufacturingWINS initiative.

To help meet the program’s goals, the consortium brought in Tooling U-SME, the leader in manufacturing training and development, to integrate its online training programs across all nine schools. Tooling U-SME maps its online training classes to the NAM Skills Certification System.

“The NAM Skills Certification System is the keystone strategy of the grant and Tooling U-SME courses are aligned with that and help our students prepare for success,” said Stephen Long, associate vice chancellor, workforce solutions, St. Louis Community College, which heads up the consortium.

Long added that all schools in the consortium agreed to participate with the Tooling U-SME program. “To get all nine colleges to do the same program and curriculum is a feat – it’s a good product. We like the robustness of the Tooling U-SME curriculum and model including the administrative side and the support from the Tooling U-SME team has been phenomenal.”

The Tooling U-SME team was involved from the start, working with participating schools to build an industry-driven curriculum aligned with the NAM Skills Certification System. The company also worked closely with the consortium to build hierarchy and structure for Tooling U-SME’s Learning Management System that easily administers, delivers, tracks and reports the training activity of learners.

A dedicated account team arranged virtual and on-site meetings to coordinate and train each individual school on

account set-up, system rollout, alignment with the Tooling U-SME curriculum and implementation.

“While originally a bit intimidated, our instructors really love Tooling U-SME now, especially the administrative tools where they can easily monitor student progress and activity,” said Long. “This helps them know which areas they need to address with their students.”

Tooling U-SME courses are versatile and can be integrated in various ways to support both theoretical and practical learning. For instance, a Precision Machining course uses face-to-face instruction in conjunction with Tooling U-SME online classes while a Certified Production Technician (CPT) course is largely all online classes. Based on Tooling U-SME’s recommendations, in some cases, instructors will bring in other resources such as texts to complement the online courses.

One of the big advantages for employers is that the curriculum and Tooling U-SME training ensures consistency, according to Becky Epps, project manager, St. Louis Community College, MoManufacturingWINS.

“Through the statewide consortium, we offer standard training and teach to an end product based on NAM skills,” she said. “Manufacturers know that no matter which school these students graduate from, they have the needed skills.”

Currently, there are 20 programs using the Tooling U-SME curriculum from nine schools. Since August 2013, more than 350 students have completed nearly 8,400 classes. Through the end of December 2013, more than 980 credentials have been awarded consortium wide.

Tooling U-SME online courses have been well received by the mostly non-traditional students targeted by the grant including unemployed and underemployed participants and others who require additional technical training for high-demand careers. Veterans are also participating.

“Our last CPT class had students from 18 to 65 years old,” Epps said. “Not all students may have the discipline or time management skills needed for a self-paced class so we require students to come in at check in points and meet with an instructor which has worked well.”

Computers are available to those who don’t have them at home.

“The MoManufacturingWINS initiative funded by the DOL grant can provide inspiration to other states across the country focused on building a strong skilled workforce in the manufacturing area,” said Gretchen N. Schultz, workforce development coordinator, Tooling U-SME. “Every day we work with manufacturers to understand which skills they require and use that input to help schools like those in the Missouri consortium ensure their students are obtaining the knowledge and skills needed, as quickly as possible, to be immediately employable.”

The nine colleges participating in the statewide consortium are East Central College (Union), Linn State Technical College (Linn), Metropolitan Community College (Kansas City), Mineral Area College (Park Hills), North Central Missouri College (Trenton), Ozarks Technical Community College (Springfield), State Fair Community College (Sedalia), St. Charles Community College, and St. Louis Community College.