

SOUTHWEST

TENNESSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

January 8, 2016

Dear Mr. Berry,

Your request for comment on our use of SMT was referred to me. As Executive Director of Workforce Development for Southwest Tennessee Community College I am happy to respond with three points.

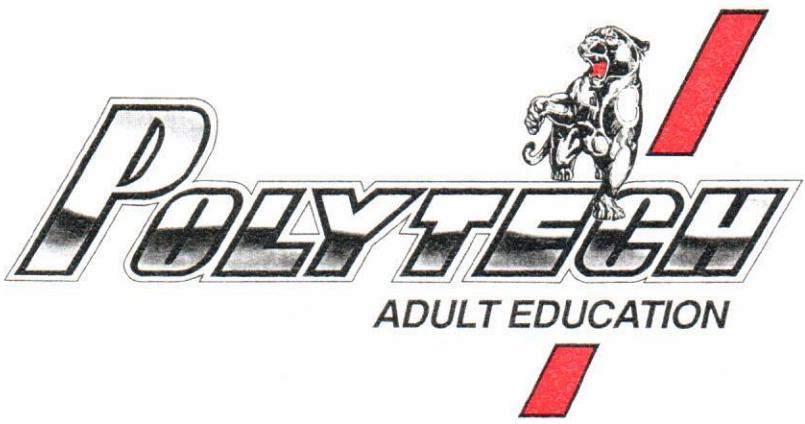
First, you should know that we use SMT as the centerpiece of industrial machine training for continuing education classes and customized corporate training. When Southwest rolled out its continuing education class for Industrial Readiness Training (IRT) in 2012, we linked the SMT Level 1 Basic Mechanics Training with soft employability skills and presented the package to major manufacturers as part of the local economic development incentives for companies moving to Memphis. We are most proud to say that more than 1500 entry level employees have been trained on SMT. Those employees have worked for Electrolux, KTG, Blues City Brewery and many other manufacturers.

Second, experience has shown that the IRT-SMT combination often added an additional dollar or two to hourly wages. Over the years, we have added blueprint reading for entry level workers. Southwest uses SMT Level 2 almost exclusively with skilled incumbent workers through customized corporate training that is geared toward succession planning, promotions and cost savings. As an example, we currently use SMT with Unilever and Hershey. Our clients are very satisfied with the product and the skill retention of employees trained.

Finally, we applaud your plans to standardize SMT for college credit. That strategy is consistent with national trends and our own effort to create pathways from the non-credit continuing education classes to our credit based advanced integrated industrial technology (AIIT) and mechatronics curriculum. I hope you will keep us informed as your work with ACE progresses. SMT instruction material and assessment equipment are essential to our non-credit industrial training philosophy. We send best wishes as you take SMT to the next level.

Sincerely,

Naomi C. Earp
Executive Director
Workforce Development, Corporate Training & Continuing Education



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January 14, 2016

The growing nationwide skills gap in the manufacturing field is being clearly seen and felt in Delaware. The demand for competent technicians, able to work with increasingly complex machinery, is now at the highest level in decades. Over the past five years, there has been a 45 percent increase in the total number of industrial mechanic positions statewide (Delaware Wages, 2009, 2014). We are definitely experiencing our share of this growth in Kent County, where Polytech Adult Education is located. One local employer alone has added dozens of new technician positions over the past year and is scheduled to add over a hundred more in the next several months.

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Assistant Superintendent

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Director

JEREMY McENTIRE
Community Education
Coordinator

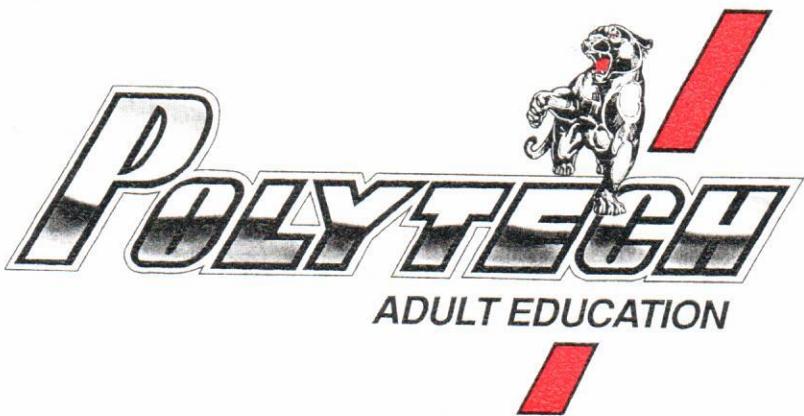
Polytech Adult Education, has been able to help meet this need though the creation of the Delaware Manufacturing Development Center (DMDC). The focus of the Center is twofold – identifying specific skills gaps through precision assessment and closing those gaps through the implementation of customized training modules. This would not have been possible without the partnership with Scientific Management Techniques (SMT).

SMT assessment devices are recognized by Delaware employers as the industry standard. There is nothing else available like them for identifying industrial skills and aptitude in a number of critical areas. Having these devices has allowed us to assist local employers identify the capabilities of their existing and incumbent workforces. After getting an accurate picture of where the gaps are, the SMT Mechatronics training program has given us the tools we need to begin to address them in a targeted way. The hands-on, modular format allows us to deliver training in a flexible and responsive manner.

Since its inception approximately 14 months ago, the DMDC has assessed and/or trained over 150 individuals and has worked with a total of six local industry partner organizations. Discussions and plans are currently underway to expand the number of customers being served and there are approximately 100 additional students already scheduled to be trained over the next 12 months.

In addition to the obvious benefits to the employers, this training has been important to the employees/students who have participated as well. Some of our partner organizations have been able to create a professional advancement structure, allowing for progression and promotion, where none had existed previously. Other individuals, who were not initially selected for advancement, have been able to receive targeted training, opening up the possibility for career development opportunities in the future.

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The ability of students who participate in the SMT program to earn college credits would offer them an even greater benefit than they have already received. This would open up the potential of a higher education pathway that they may never even have considered a possibility before. Polytech Adult Education is fully supportive of this effort and is greatly looking forward to the chance to participate and be of assistance as it moves forward.

Sincerely,

Jeremy D. McEntire
Delaware Manufacturing Development Center
Program Coordinator

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