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New Interactive Program Brings Ohio Students Pathways to Manufacturing Jobs

Career counseling tools combine game-based and multi-media platforms to encourage middle and high school students to engage in STEM curriculum

DAYTON, Ohio – LIFT – Lightweight Innovations For Tomorrow, a Manufacturing USA Institute, today announced the launch of new manufacturing career counseling tools for middle and high schools in Ohio. Through this program, teachers in Montgomery County and surrounding areas will have new game-based and multi-media STEM platforms to engage middle and high school students in career exploration and learning.

The program, to be launched in 50 Montgomery County and other counties high schools and their associated feeder middle schools, will deliver Learning Blade® and eduFACTOR programming to the schools to provide the students with ongoing learning opportunities about advanced manufacturing.

Manufacturing in Ohio continues to grow. With more than 735,000 people employed in lightweight-related manufacturing jobs, employers still posted nearly 20,000 job openings online in the fourth quarter of 2016.

“Manufacturing is Ohio’s heritage and the industry here is strong and getting stronger, both in terms of employment and employer demand,” said Ohio Lt. Governor Mary Taylor. “As a state, we need to continue the forward momentum we’ve started by providing as many pathways and opportunities as we can for our students to explore after graduation. That includes providing better and updated information on advanced manufacturing careers to show them it is high-tech, exciting and can lead to successful careers.”

Learning Blade®, a product of Thinking Media, introduces STEM technologies and career opportunities through an entertaining game-based format. In the web-based system, students pursue engaging missions that solve problems, like helping an injured dolphin or building an orphanage after an earthquake. It features a metals manufacturing mission, “Lightweight Aircraft,” from an earlier LIFT investment.

eduFACTOR is a membership-based, online suite of multimedia resources including a TV series, virtual field trip experiences, technology video series, career pathways video series, hands-on CNC and 3D printing projects, interactive STEM activities, CTE success video series, and more.

“By connecting these two programs across both middle and high schools, we can provide a continuing pathway for these students to see advanced manufacturing as a great career option,” said Tony Bagshaw, managing director, Battelle for Kids, a supporter of LIFT’s efforts to offer this innovative, economic-driven approach that will advance opportunities for students in Montgomery County.

Middle school students who complete selected units on manufacturing careers in Learning Blade will be directed to video resources and activities on the eduFACTOR platform that provide real-life examples of using these skills in exciting applications.

The high schools will have access to a library of multimedia tools to inspire their students towards careers in manufacturing and make learning concepts relevant in the context of a story. It provides teachers with 24/7 access to media, lesson plans, projects and presentations in an easy-to-understand online portal.

“By providing the tools which connect students to skill-building in science, technology, engineering and math throughout their school careers, our goal is to keep them engaged with advanced manufacturing curriculum so they are ready to pursue a career or go on to post-secondary education in these fields,” said Emily DeRocco, director, education and workforce development, LIFT.

“Connecting students with advanced manufacturing is the only way to fill the talent pipeline and close the ever-growing skills gap.”

LIFT, one of the founding [Manufacturing USA](#) institutes, and a part of the National Network of Manufacturing Innovation program, is a Detroit-based public-private partnership dedicated to developing and deploying advanced lightweight metal manufacturing technologies, and implementing education and training programs to better prepare the workforce today and in the future.

ABOUT LIFT

LIFT is a Detroit-based, public-private partnership committed to the development and deployment of advanced lightweight metal manufacturing technologies, and implementing education and training initiatives to better prepare the workforce today and in the future. LIFT is one of the founding institutes of Manufacturing USA, and is funded in part by the Department of Defense with management through the Office of Naval Research. Visit www.lift.technology or follow on Twitter [@NewsFromLIFT](https://twitter.com/NewsFromLIFT) to learn more.