

## Festo Ireland Technology for Secondary Schools Initiative 2016

Limerick Institute of Technology hosted a two day event on 19th and 20th May last demonstrating Meclab Stacking station to students from twenty secondary schools across Ireland. The aim of the event was to provide equipment to secondary level schools for educating engineering and technology students and to promote engineering and technology as career choices. Managing director Mark McArdle Festo IE agreed 75% sponsorship towards this event to further develop the STEM initiative integrating technology and engineering concepts with science and mathematics.



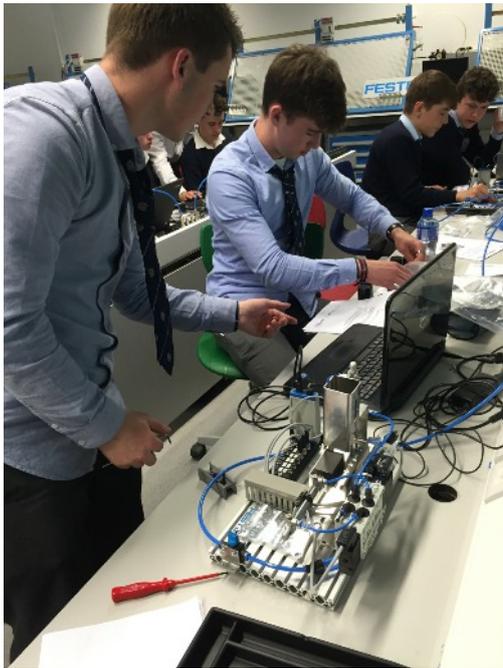
Students and teachers from twenty secondary schools were invited to take part. Each day ran from 10am until 4pm. Ciaran O’Loughlin lecturer at LIT opened each session explaining what the Meclab Stacking Magazine station could do and then students were asked to assemble the extra parts onto their rigs (solenoid valves magnetic proximity switch etc) – their attention was caught with immediate effect - They were then encouraged to test the rig manually, test the outputs, wire up rigs and evaluate the performance of the stacking station. Ciaran continued with some basic fundamentals of pneumatic and electric circuits and relays. Students proceeded to link their Meclab station to power, compressed air and FluidSim. John McAllister Didactic manager from Festo-Ireland was also on hand for any technical issues and also to encourage students to develop their own control circuits using FluidSim.



LIT had organised a plaque to be made with the students own name, school name plus Festo and LIT logos inscribed on it. Students were encouraged to assist in the making of this plaque and then attach it to their individual rigs.



Festo Ireland requested students to complete a feedback sheet and the general consensus was they would have “liked more time to spend working with their rig” however all were very excited and honoured to be able to bring the Meclab Stacking Station back to their individual schools for use in their class subject. Both days ran very smoothly and there was a good attendance of both female/male participants.



Teachers feedback was also very positive – they would love to have Meclab stations in order to teach these subjects - “so much more interesting for the students than teaching it from the blackboard”and also “less time consuming” were just some of the comments. Festo IE had the three Meclab Stations on display – Stacking Magazine Station, Conveyor Station and Handling station which drew quite a lot of attention from both students and teachers.

It is hoped that LIT will follow up on a refresher course in the month of November 2016. Well done to all the staff involved at LIT and a big thank you to the Engineering Technology Teachers Association Area 2, and also to other sponsors which included Modular Automation, Johnson & Johnson, Quantum 3, Rusal Aughish Alumina.

[http://www.lit.ie/News/Item/LIT\\_FESTO\\_Technology\\_for\\_Schools\\_Initiative\\_2016.aspx](http://www.lit.ie/News/Item/LIT_FESTO_Technology_for_Schools_Initiative_2016.aspx)



(l-r Ciarain O’Loughlin (LIT), John Walsh (LIT), Margaret Lynn (Festo IE), John McAllister (Festo IE), Paul Hickey (LIT))