

CASE STUDY

Tampa Area Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee

TAMPA AREA
JATC

The Tampa Area Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC), is a partnership between the Florida West Coast Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local Union 915.

TAMPA AREA JATC ADOPTS SIMULATIONS OFFERING REAL-LIFE BENEFITS

A key element of the compulsory 100 hours of classroom training, troubleshooting simulations engage and challenge apprentices while offering a unique learning management resource for instructors.

Education Overview

The Tampa Area, Florida JATC trains and develops the highly-skilled journeymen wiremen who are in high demand by the region's industrial and commercial employers. Responsible for training electrical apprentices over a swath of the Sunshine State stretching from Pasco County, in the north, to Charlotte County, in the South, these employers represent the power production industry, chemical plants, warehouses, office buildings and shopping centers. The Tampa JATC five-year apprenticeship program combines one-day-per-week classroom work supported by mentored on-the-job training.

The goal of the Tampa JATC is to ensure its apprentices have the in-depth knowledge and skills to take over as the industry's leaders when the large group of baby boomers retire. Meeting the learning needs of young apprentices along with the desires of instructors to track and test students, the Tampa JATC turned to **Simutech Multimedia** to provide electrical troubleshooting training to its apprentices throughout the program's five-year term.

"THESE YOUNG people today may not have ever built a fort or been as mischievous as I was, but they can play video games and do things on a computer that I didn't even know was possible. So, if you can put something in a format that makes it look like a game, then they will learn and enjoy it, maybe not even realize they're learning."

Tom Bedwell, Assistant Training Director, Tampa Area Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC)

Objective and Solution

In 2011, the **Simutech Training System** was introduced and the apprentices and training staff realized immediate benefits. Building on those successes, in 2014 the Tampa JATC became an early adopter of Simutech's Transit Edition that is founded on the same reliable simulations but offers increased mobility and convenience. Apprentices have convenient access to the programs on as many as three computers/laptops and following on the wave of blended learning changes, instructors enjoy easy access to monitor and support student work.

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Apprentices

As of 2014, the apprentices were able to access the simulations at home—reducing driving time and allowing for more family time—cutting gas costs and wear on personal vehicles.

Hardware Trainers

The life of the hardware trainers was extended and the maintenance costs could be controlled because the costly hardware expendables did not have to be used for testing as often.

Instructors

Instructors were provided control over new tests and many more faults than could be created on the hardware trainers. The troubleshooting software was used to prepare students for the hardware trainers.

Computers

The Tampa JATC training center was able to maximize the use of its computers as students worked on the simulations year round, not just during exams at the end of each year.

The Results

Since introducing the **Simutech Training System** in 2011, more than 150 apprentices have completed troubleshooting training, helping to meet the objectives for training in electrical theory, code and safety. The five-year program requires 8000 hours of on-the-job training and a minimum of 1000 hours of classroom training. Bedwell says the fact that the simulations turn learning into a game is appealing to his students and that many students don't want to leave the computer room when the lights turn out at the end of the day. He adds that the competitive aspect of the simulations combines with peer pressure to motivate apprentices to focus and keep up with the class so that everyone advances to the hardware lab at the same time. The Tampa JATC also uses the simulations to provide assessment services to their corporate clients by conducting troubleshooting tests for new job applicants.

Since adopting the Transit Edition in 2014, the apprentices have saved money on travel and the Tampa JATC instructors have been armed with a training tool that helps teach and test students before they tackle the energized and expensive hardware trainers. For their part, the instructors like the freedom to log in anytime, 24/7, and check-in on the progress of students. With the information gathered by the **Simutech Course Manager**, instructors can easily identify the go-getters who exhibit a keen interest in learning and troubleshooting and are ready to fill the job openings that will be left by the retiring baby boomers.