

STORIES FOR ADVOCACY

Student Gains Sense of Self as Learner

As told by Kathleen Fulton, National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) to Suzie Boss

Does technology really make a difference for students?

That question reminds me of Michael, a student I met many years ago.

It was the late 1980s, and I was conducting research for the first report on education and technology from the Office of Technology Assessment. Our report—*Power On! New Tools for Teaching and Learning*—was to include video interviews with students.

Technology helped to make a difference in a student's approach to education at a critical age.

Michael, then about 12, was a street-smart “dude” who had not been terribly successful in school. His inner-city school had gained early access to technology through Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow. During our visit, we could see that Michael was obviously turned on by the computer. Interviewing him for the video, we asked him why he was so engaged. He thought for a while, then said with a big smile, “Well, you know, it just changed my style.”

I don't know what became of Michael, but I have never forgotten his observation. Technology changed how he thought about himself. He became empowered and enthusiastic about learning. For him, technology helped to make a difference in his approach to education at a critical age.

Focus on Funding

This was a study conducted by the Office of Technology Assessment, U.S. Congress. The office was eliminated in 1995.

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