

Teens' Technology Knowledge Could Clinch Workplace Success

by **Jill M. Landsman**

RESTON, VA —A recent survey shows that — despite uncertainty in the current economic climate — college-bound students planning technology careers are optimistic about their employment potential. The Technology Student Association (TSA) recently surveyed about 100 student leaders, ages 13 to 18, who see a need for technology skills in their employment future. In fact, with today's information-based economy, these teens saw technology education as their single best ticket to better jobs and better pay.

"Technology education gives me the skills that I need to work in the job of my choice, and has allowed me to learn and access information more easily" said Doug,* 16, from Colorado and a five-year TSA student.

The TSA survey reveals that these college-bound TSA students focus on practical issues about selecting a college: college majors offered, career preparation, cost of college, and the school's academic reputation. For their present academic goals, girls expressed a desire to do better in mathematics, gain even greater understanding of computer uses, and polish their public speaking skills. Boys said they wanted to determine career plans, develop better study habits and skills, and become better public speakers.

TSA, which now celebrates its 25th year as a non-profit student organization, is dedicated to its mission of preparing its 160,000 members nationwide for the challenges of a dynamic world by promoting technological literacy, leadership and problem solving. It is the only national student organization devoted exclusively to the needs of young people in technology education.

"Our association's teachers are committed to ensuring that our student members become part of a talented workforce that is equipped to succeed in technology-driven work environments," said Rosanne T. White, Ed.D., National TSA's executive director in Reston, VA.

"Technology education encompasses all skills needed in the real world – problem-solving, leadership, communication," said Mary, a 15-year-old TSA student from Tennessee. "It is ever-changing and puts students on the cutting edge of the business world." And our students respect

"We're rapidly approaching the day when the primary discriminator between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' will be between those who understand technology and those who don't. It won't be age or sex or color or culture. No, it will be technology – the ability to understand it and use it – as an engineer, or scientist, as a medical technician ... or just about any other profession in the world."

**Former NASA Administrator,
Daniel S. Golden, 1999**

technology's benefits. Said 13-year-old Sarah from Delaware, "Technology has improved my life by making [it] easier and better. Technology has improved my community by making it healthier and safer."

One clue about the vital role technology plays in today's world comes from Sharon, a 16-year-old Florida girl. "Technology is my life," she admitted.

TSA student leaders are committed to advancing their technological know how. Problem solving is one technology skill developed by Betty, an 18-year-old Texan. She said, "I think outside the box." Student leaders like Betty appreciate the TSA influence.

The passion to understand technology is one common denominator for these technology education students. Many share 17-year-old Joseph's enthusiasm to learn more about technology. "Technology excites the mind and enlivens the spirit," said the Pennsylvania student. Todd, an 18-year-old Texan, claimed that technology "has given me an outlet to express my creativity. I am very adept at learning computer programming languages and software and am well acquainted with high-tech physics and mathematics."

Perhaps the greatest byproduct of technology education is underscored in the view of 18-year-old Jeremy, a Florida TSA student for four years. "TSA has made me realize my potential in life," he said. And to help convert the technology "have nots" to technology "haves," 17-year-old Sam, from Mississippi, states a fundamental idea: "Technology education bridges the digital divide." Within the next four years, approximately half of employment opportunities will require some information technology skills, according to the U. S. Department of Labor. Technology education in high school and in college will provide the training and innovative skills needed to help students compete for jobs and be prepared for the anticipated technology-driven economic upturn. A timely investment in students, teachers, and facilities will help us address the needs of a secure economic future and ensure an educated, technically proficient and entrepreneurial citizenry. The quality and intellectual capacity of tomorrow's workforce will determine our nation's future success. ●

**Real names are not used to respect the students' privacy*

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