

Discussion:
Business @ the Speed of Thought
by Bill Gates

On your own:

1. Review Jonathan Kozol's main point.

2. Summarize Bill Gates' main point.

As a group:

[Review from last class]

3. What problems does the community of East St. Louis face? What problems does its school district face?
4. What priority does the Principal of East St. Louis High School place on computers for his schools? Do you agree?
5. The East St. Louis history teacher says he feels "utterly cut off" from educational developments in modern public schools. Would more computers and Internet access help solve his dilemma?
6. When asked if they would be satisfied with a top-notch modern school that remained racially segregated, what did the East St. Louis students say?

[Additional discussion topics]

7. How have school districts like Western Heights, Oklahoma or Melbourne, Australia, managed to provide computer-based technology to the schools? Would this work for East St. Louis? Western Heights has a relationship with Dayton Tires, a major employer. What relationship does East St. Louis have with its major industries in the area?

8. Bill Gates notes the prevalent fear that the gap between the “haves” – those who have a PC in the home, and the “have-nots” – those who don’t, will create a major gap in opportunities. How likely are the residents of East St. Louis to have a computer in their home?
9. Decide whether or not Internet-enabled classrooms and take-home computers would significantly aid the children of East St. Louis. Why or why not?
10. Summarize how Gates thinks computers in schools should be funded, and decide if this would work for East St. Louis. Why or why not?
11. PC-based learning is described as a “self-directed problem-solving approach” that is superior to other methods because it is flexible enough to accommodate a broad degree of learning styles. Could/should PCs replace teachers in financially strapped locations such as East St. Louis?