

# **Student Essay on Better Use of Technology in the Classroom**

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# Essay

## Educational Digest

This article was about a story about one district and its successful implementation of staff developments that led to a more thorough integration of technology in instructional practices. Spearfish School District in South Dakota received a five-year increase in professional development funding from a U.S. Department of Education Technology Innovations Challenge grant through a South Dakota program entitled LOFTI (Learning Organizations for Technology Integration.) Through this program, the school district "focused on increasing teachers' technology skills and defining and incorporating technology integration into classroom lesson plans." (Steele, 2004) Some of the ways that the district provided professional development included "providing an opportunity to join a cohort of educators to pursue a master's degree ..... ; implementing a range of professional development delivery approaches, including just ask customized individualized services; allowing flexible scheduling for need-based small- and large-group training; and providing support to attend out-of-district conferences." (Steele, 2004). As a result of the additional training, teachers were rewarded credits, which could be used towards advancement in the districts pay schedule. Upon conclusion of the five-years of staff development training, the Spearfish School District found that "over 85% of district teachers received a moderate to intensive amount of training in technology skill building. Over 85% also received moderate to intensive training in teaching with technology, and nearly 70% had moderate to intensive training in classroom methods." (Steele, 2004).

As a future administrator, I find this article helpful in identifying what staff development should be offered for personnel. Often times a school district will put together staff development that is very restrictive to a teachers needs or only addresses the needs of a select few teachers. I appreciated the flexibility that the Spearfish School District used in allowing teachers to pursue their own course work as well as allowing teachers to provide input as to what was needed for staff development. I also found the idea of allowing teachers to attend staff developments of other school districts to be a very interesting concept. Through this article I was able to see that I may not specifically know what my teachers would need for staff development unless I were to ask. I also feel, after reading this article, that there would be an increase in staff development participation and enjoyment by teachers if the staff developments were a product of teacher input.