



**State Educational Technology Directors Association
Leadership Summit's Toolkit 2006
Using Data for School Reform**

General Information

1. Name of the Data Initiative: Utah Test Item Pool Service – an online, open source, formative, classroom assessment tool
2. Your State: Utah
3. Date the Initiative Began: 2000/2001
4. Dollars Invested to Date (Approximately): \$750,000
5. What were the funding mechanisms:
 - Utah State Office of Education (USOE) general funds
 - Federal Grant program fund

What efforts will your state make to enhance your statewide network in the next five years? USOE continues to support the development of the UTIPS software and coordinate deployment of servers to districts or regions as usage patterns warrant. (See http://www.utips.org/download/Utips_Stats_May.pdf?user_id=1&item_id=4074578 for a chart showing usage patterns of the service.) The lead software developers continue to evolve the software. The Utah Education Network provides leadership for WAN development. The Utah State Office of Education provides leadership in educational resources and assessment expertise. Professional development is a collaborative between local and state agencies; a new UTIPS training manual was developed in May through August of 2006.

Initial Planning

1. Describe the strongest driving force behind the implementation? For example, please elaborate on any of the following or your own:
 - Online Assessment & Testing Pressures
 - School Administrators
 - Teachers
2. What was the biggest challenge? Utah's biggest hurdle for UTIPS from the beginning was locating and correlating a large enough quantity of quality test items to the state core. Various departments at the state office and at a few districts had test items in various levels of development and in various formats. Some were only available on paper. Some were in databases. Some were in Word Perfect, or Microsoft Word format.
3. How did you overcome that challenge? First, UTIPS developers went from cubicle to cubicle collecting the items from various specialists. Next, they cleaned up the most obvious issues such as spelling as they put them into electronic form. Next, USOE contracted with assessment specialists to review each item and its correlation to the core. Last, USOE is



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providing budget streams to develop new items as each of the main core curriculum areas are revised.

4. What has been the best result so far? Each year, more Utah teachers are using UTIPS to benchmark student mastery of the core curriculum. More teachers are beginning conversations around data-driven-decision making and Utah's core standards and objectives.

Benefits & Return on Investment

1. Have you performed a study on the Return on Investment (ROI)? No.
2. If so, what were the results of the ROI analysis?
3. Ways the initiative addresses Federal accountability requirements of NCLB? Data from the tool is not reported to the state or to the federal government. However, teachers are learning how to better use formative assessment as part of their regular instruction. This additional tool helps teachers and students in preparation for the end-of-level criterion-referenced tests in the core areas each year which is used to help determine AYP for NCLB.
4. Ways the initiative leverages data to support teacher quality? UTIPS makes it possible for teachers to pull from a pool of test items to spot-check student progress towards mastery of the core. Access to this tool and to the data is making it easier for educators to have data discussions at the grade or department level.

Data Training

1. Do you provide training for SEA management? If so, please describe. No, UTIPS is a teacher and classroom tool that is supported at the state, region, and district level.
2. Do you provide training for SEA staff? If so, please describe. No. See above. However, SEA content specialists have participated in developing and/or providing test items to be used in the UTIPS tool.
3. Do you provide data training for district administrators? If so, please describe. Yes. Utah has a pilot program providing data specialists who work with and mentor administrators.
4. Do you provide data training for building level administrators? If so, please describe. Yes, data specialists and state, regional, and district technology trainers provide outreach to, and training for, school administrators.
5. Do you provide data training for school level educators? If so, please describe. Yes, data specialists have been providing training for how to use UTIPS to inform the instructional process. Technology trainers have been providing technical training for using the UTIPS tool.



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Beginning in the fall of 2006, technology trainers will start using a state-developed training program to augment the technical training with discussions about how to use data to inform instruction.

Communication Benefits

1. How does the network enhance communication among schools and districts? UTIPS has a usergroup comprised of local, district, regional, and state-level educators. This usergroup is the advisory panel for development and training issues.
2. How does the network enhance communication among teachers and parents? Some teachers are beginning to use UTIPS at the beginning of the school year to get each student's baseline knowledge of the new core content for the school year. Some of these teachers are using this information in their first meeting with parents to discuss the content they will provide during the school year. This is a paradigm shift for some educators. In the past they had only the results of the previous year's CRT results which measured the students against their previous year's content.
3. How does the network enhance communication to community leaders? Since this is a classroom-based tool, it is not used for community discussions. The CRT tests scores at the end of the year (which are not part of the UTIPS system) are used to communicate generalized information about student achievement gains or losses.

Sharing the Benefits

1. What mechanisms does your state have in place to share the benefits of your statewide initiative to State Legislators and Appropriators? (newsletters, reporting, meetings, etc.) Because this is a classroom tool that is funded from existing state funding sources, UTIPS is not typically part of the ongoing dialog around student achievement. However, when educators who use UTIPS are asked to discuss how they are assessing their students' mastery of the core, they talk about the role of baseline and formative assessment in their instruction.
2. What benefits do you enjoy from having the statewide data initiative that have not been mentioned thus far? (Transferability of data, etc.) The threat of NCLB sanctions generates anxiety. UTIPS gives school administrators and classroom teachers a convenient way to assess their students' mastery of the core before the autopsy test at the end of the school year. UTIPS is giving the power back to the teachers and relieving some of their end of year test anxiety.

Leadership Teams

1. Do you have a state level leadership team that meets to discuss the statewide network regularly? If so, what job titles are included on that team? Yes. State Assessment Director, various state content specialists, UTIPS developers, and the UTIPS usergroup which includes district testing directors, network specialists, and technology trainers.



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2. If the network is more mature, what job titles were included on the initial team? An associate superintendent and the state curriculum director were part of the initial team.