The Starting Point project is exploring the ability of on-line resources to catalyze improvements in undergraduate teaching. Our goal is to develop a resource that intimately integrates pedagogy with teaching resources and fully supports a virtual community of educators.

Teaching Entry-Level Geoscience Site Launched, July 2003

- The Starting Point site provides concrete pedagogic advice for faculty teaching entry-level geoscience courses that can be discovered by teaching method or geoscience topic.
- Teaching methods are outlined from a Geoscience perspective with a discussion of how and why to use. Topics include: Socratic Questioning, Teaching with Models, and Investigative Cases.
- Thirty-five classroom ready examples demonstrate the use of methods for teaching the full spectrum of entry-level geoscience topics.

Initiating Evaluation Studies

- Over 3600 visitors since launch with an average session of 2.5 page views.
- Site walkthroughs indicate faculty are engaged by geoscience examples and excited by site; all reviewers bookmarked site.
- Faculty interviews indicate strong use of Google for finding information and images on the web.

Lessons Learned for NSDL

- Specialized portals can provide solutions for specific user groups.
- DL technology enables meta-data sharing that supports rapid development of specialized portals.
- Collaboration on evaluation studies will help our project.

Technology Supporting Development

- Exploits DLESE Cataloging System and OAI protocols for resource management and sharing
- Enables tracking and cross-referencing of resource links
- Enables distributed portal authoring and community contribution

Links between resource records and resource references in context.