NSDL Pathways Meeting
August 4-5, 2010
Boulder, Colorado

The NSDL Pathways meeting 2010 concentrated on four breakout group discussions and report out, with whole-group discussion after each breakout. Breakout topics and questions were:

- **Envisioning the learning landscape in 2015**. What are the salient features of the landscape? What are the key drivers of change? What practices, tools, and models are being used and deployed for different learner audiences in 2015? What/who will be our competition? Where do we need more information to understand this emerging landscape?

- **Pathways SWOT analysis - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.** How is your Pathway positioned to respond to the 2015 landscape? What are our individual and collective assets and liabilities? What are the common patterns and unique differences?

- **Creating the next generation NSDL.** How do we move towards the 2015 vision? What infrastructure is needed? What are our recommendations for NSF? Does the current logic model still stand? What are the next evolutionary and revolutionary steps for Pathways/ RC / TNS / Services? What are the common set of practices and capabilities that will make an effective collaborative? What might future NSDL user interactions look like? How might NSDL's competencies and assets be used differently going forward? What would be the outcomes and measures of success for individual Pathways and NSDL? Is our vision of NSDL sufficiently broad to allow innovation?

- **Develop recommendations for an imagined future NSDL solicitation.**

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1. Following the meeting, staff and PIs of the Resource Center and Technical Network Services met to discuss outcomes and next steps for the potential preparation of a report to NSF on meeting outcomes. Two small teams from RC and TNS, led by Mary Marlino and Tammy Sumner, analyzed the Pathway Meeting notes, both large and small groups. RC and TNS met in late August to review results.

2. The Pathways call on Wednesday, September 8 (summary below) focused on review of the outcomes of the meeting information analysis.

3. The 2010 Annual Meeting included opportunities for wider discussion of themes emerging from the Pathways August meeting. See http://nsdlnetwork.org/content/group-wiki/1221/annual-meeting-discussion for Annual Meeting discussion.

4. Indications from NSF were increasingly developing about a reduced approach to NSDL funding, confirmed by the February 14 notification to NSDL that the funding program within DUE would be discontinued as of September 30, 2011.

September 8, 2010 Pathways call discussion summary (Pathways meeting outcomes)

On the call:

RC: Kaye Howe, Susan Van Gundy, Eileen McIlvain, Susan Jesuroga, Laura Moin

TNS: Mike Wright, Tammy Sumner, Holly Devaul, Karon Kelly

PWs: ComPADRE - Bruce Mason; MathPath - Betsy Peisach, Gail Long; MatDL - Laura Bartolo; ChemEd DL - Jon Holmes; AMSER - Rachael Bower, Ed Almasy; BEN - Yolanda George, Brittany Taggart; CLEAN - Tamara Ledley, Mark McCaffrey; TeachingwithData: JP DeWitt, Lynette Hoelter; Ensemble - Lois Delcambre; Teachers' Domain - Ted Sicker; Engingeering - Paul Mackinney; MSP2 - Mary Henton

Kaye Howe gave a summary of the findings of the two teams who analyzed the breakout group discussions from the August 3-4 Pathways meeting. Both teams had good agreement on primary outcomes from those discussions. Goal for today is to go through the analysis, have PW comment and discussion, clarification, etc. Then the RC will put out another version of the findings after today's discussion to NSDL PIs and schedule a subsequent Brown Bag for additional community input (likely to be Thursday, September 23). The projected goal is to get a report to NSF by mid-November, after the annual meeting, and to be able to have that report have an impact on the NSDL solicitation-building process for 2011. There will likely be some flexibility in the timing, but will keep projects advised.

Cross-cutting themes from the analysis included:

• heterogenous views of NSDL
• openness to work across project boundaries
• need/desire to capitalize on marketing opportunities
• profit/sustainability tensions
• maintaining high quality of resources and services

Initial discussion focused on gaining clarification for an idea that seemed to emerge from the meeting that "Pathways have run their course".

• Discussion clarified that the *no-need-for-more-Pathways* interpretation is an overstatement.

• Pathways concept should expand to go beyond disciplinary or audience silos, to much more cross-cutting directions and in ways that enable, foster and provide opportunity for cross-project collaboration.

• Pathways are one of the most successful things to come out of NSDL, especially in the connections that have been built within specific communities - we have learned a great deal about what it takes to serve communities and what works best to move towards a more coherent NSDL

• This kind of community building and outreach takes time, and sustainable support, and requires larger scale grant-making to continue the work.

• Shift in emphasis toward cross-PW, cross-project collaboration and integration

- One key point is quality - is there a way to evaluate overall PWs? metascale evaluation, so that some recommendations for better integration within and across NSDL can be accomplished

- Key outcome: we are an optimistic group! the glass is half-full instead of half-empty. (Threats were most often also interpreted as opportunities)

Any missing major themes missing? Key points:

- Sustainability of projects - has big implications for any cross-integration effort

- Limitations of STEM - we've learned a great deal about how to present digital materials -> this is an opportunity to go beyond STEM. Client organizations/potential customers emphasize need for a comprehensive curricular approach (language arts, humanities, social sciences)

Solicitation recommendations - key points:

- Evaluation focus - need to shift funds to evaluation and impact (DRL/learning sciences). Sense that evaluation is an unfunded mandate -> causes frustration (little coordination, guidance, funding). Real student learning evaluation is time-and-expense-intensive. When "impact" is divided across grants, no one has sufficient resources to accomplish.

  - Evaluation is at a high level of significance, expense, and required expertise -> should be done higher than at the project level, and should also be an integrated, coordinated activity across PWs. The 'legs' for evaluation has to stay in projects and their audiences; has to be coordination and project implementation. Must have resources to accomplish, expertise to do so, and 'minders'

  - There was a suggestion forwarded to talk to EDC about how the ITEST program handles cross-project evaluation efforts

  - Agility factor: identify big cross-project issues, enable ability to hold a workshop/summit to address

- Uber-theme for articulation: shifting focus of funding resources ($). Frame within structure of the solicitation: evaluation opportunities: perhaps different mechanisms/levels of opportunity for mature vs new projects. Sustaining and continuing the substantial investment in existing projects.