Southern Colorado Writing Project
2009 Coaching Protocol*

The following is a proposed contact schedule for coaches and institute fellows. It should allow coaches time to help participants establish an FAQ, support them through developing the FAQ into an effective demonstration, assist them in productive refection on the demonstration, and serve as a resource for any participants that will present their demonstration beyond the institute. The time and energy placed into each contact should be dependent on the needs of the participant being coached. Some participants will need additional support, while others may need less. Please keep in mind that this is a general proposal, and that coaches should be sensitive to participants needing additional contact time.

Face-to-Face Contact 1: Initial meeting (April 18). Presentation of FAQ and brainstorming time. Coaches will introduce the FAQ as whole group in the AM, then break into their smaller coaching groups in the PM. Allow participants time to brainstorm an individual list of FAQs, but be sure to leave time for sharing, collaborating, and questions.

Email Contact 1: Between first pre-SI meeting and second pre-SI meeting. Email group members to check in on progress of FAQs and open communication up for any questions or concerns at this point.

Face-to-Face Contact 2: Second pre-SI meeting. At this point, many of the participants will have solid FAQs. For these participants, have them start thinking of their next steps (audience, purpose, organization, research, student samples). A few others may have ideas of what they want to do, but need help narrowing them down or wording them into working FAQs that will lend themselves to cohesive and engaging demonstrations. Try to ask questions that will get them to their answers, rather than filling in too many of the blanks yourself (ex: “Okay, I’m hearing that you are really interested in inquiry. What specifically about it intrigues you? What have you done in the past with it? What areas about it would you still like to explore? What knowledge about this process do you think will benefit other teachers?”)

Email Contact 2: Between pre-SI 2 and 1st day of SI. Assess research and demonstration needs of coaching groups and gather any possible texts/items from classrooms before departing for the summer and check on progress of FAQ/demonstration.

Face-to-Face Contact 3: First day of the summer institute (June 8). Coaches will be present to continue to establish rapport with groups and begin moving them from FAQ to solid demonstration planning. This can be very informal and brief, really just a check-in of progress, an opportunity to address questions and concerns, and an additional assessment of needs. This is also a good time to schedule additional face-to-face contacts based on when SI members have signed up to present. Remember to stress the idea that everything they plan on presenting should be a way to address their FAQ.

Face-to-Face Contact 4: Rough draft review and discussion (at least one week prior to the demonstration if possible). This is usually a scheduled one-on-one meeting. This is an important contact stage, as it will help the participant work through the details of his or her demonstration. Coaches need to be proactive about this process. This does not mean dictating direction, but it does mean asking carefully constructed questions that help to guide the fellow toward the best demonstration possible. Help them be critical of their demonstration by questioning their rationale for any research or activities they have chosen.

Face-to-Face Contact 5: Fine-tuning of completed demonstration (at least two days prior to the demonstration). An informal run-through and final discussion may be all that is needed, although some participants may want to run through the entire demonstration as a way to time it/practice. Check to be sure that everything is ready to go. Talk about time management, organization, and cohesiveness, and go over handouts with cited resources. Allay fears, stress positives, address concerns, and support.

Face-to-Face Contact 6: Follow-up meeting (within 48 hours of the SCWP demonstration)
This meeting will include an SCWP staff member to assist and offer additional thoughts.
This is a debriefing period during which the fellow needs to be asked first about his or her impressions of the demonstration. Again, a questioning method is very effective in helping the fellow to think critically about the demonstration. Keep in mind the value of stars and wishes for this process. Address the idea of future demonstrations: "Where do you see yourself presenting this?" or "Where would you like to present this?" "How might you use your feedback from your colleagues in future presentations?" "How could you change/modify this for other audiences or time constraints?"

Post-SI contact: Contact beyond the institute can comprise mostly of email and forum interactions, although face-to-face contact may be needed if a member of your group is asked to present. Coaches should plan on at least one initial email contact with members of their coaching group to check in on any demonstration work that is continuing outside the institute. As members are asked to present, coaches will be notified via email. Contact with participants presenting outside the institute should focus on assisting them in the modification of their demonstrations to meet the needs and time constraints of the specific presentation opportunities.

*Adapted from Redwood Writing Project's "Coaching and the Summer Invitational Institutes," by Director Susan Bennett. *http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/168*.