

Bennington College, Vermont
July 31 to August 13, 2011



SUMMER INSTITUTE ON DESCRIPTIVE INQUIRY*

Using Descriptive Process To Navigate The New & Difficult Educational Terrain

Many of us work in situations that are limiting, disrespectful, and even abusive to children, families, and teachers. We often feel isolated, which makes it difficult to act on what we believe. At the Summer Institute we come together with others who share our commitment to creating classrooms and schools where all children—and all people—are valued. In joining our experience, ideas, and questions with those of other educators who share a vision that starts and builds from students' and teachers' strengths, we reinvigorate our own practice and our sense of what's possible.

**With the closing of the Prospect Archive and Center for Education and Research, the institutes formerly known as the Prospect Summer Institutes will be carried forward by a new organization, The Institute on Descriptive Inquiry Inc. There will continue to be two institutes, the Institute on Descriptive Process and the Institute on Descriptive Inquiry, and, as in the recent past, they will be collaboratively planned and facilitated by participants of the Institute on Descriptive Inquiry.*



Eduardo & His Art Work/PS 124K

MORE ABOUT THE INSTITUTE:

Participants in the Summer Institute on Descriptive Inquiry are educators, parents, and others who wish to examine issues of teaching and learning from the unique perspective that Descriptive Inquiry Processes offers. Participants are expected to be familiar with Descriptive Processes, either through attendance at the Summer Institute on Descriptive Process or through participation in groups that use the Descriptive Processes in their work.

While some educators return to the Institute from year to year, we extend a warm welcome to newcomers. Our top priority is to expand and diversify participation in this Institute. Expansion means that there are more educators speaking out for democratic values and schools responsive to children. Diversity of all kinds immeasurably adds to and strengthens that message.

The institute has two major components: the major seminar; independent work/small group inquiries.

Major seminar

This seminar addresses the framing issues of the Institute. This year our focus is on drawing out the power of descriptive inquiry to help us navigate an educational terrain defined by a disrespectful stance toward teachers and schools, an emphasis on weakness instead of strength, and ever more standardization.

We will begin this Institute with two spanning studies of practice, one done by a high school dean and one prepared by a teacher educator. These studies are conducted by participants who bring documentary materials for these studies to the Institute. Following these studies, on Thursday and Friday, we will move into work with text that grounds Descriptive Inquiry.

In the first two days of our second week our emphasis will be on Descriptive Inquiry Process, particularly on the Modes of Thinking and Learning heading of the Descriptive Review. On Wednesday, we will form small groups around a range of readings and other media. The exact list of books has not yet been finalized. However, we do know it will include novels, poetry and non-fiction. In the April letter that comes to registered participants, specific selections will be listed.

Independent work/small group inquiries

In the afternoons and evenings, there are many choices. Some participants bring projects of their own to work on. Often participants bring a piece of work that they would like others to help them examine. Small groups are organized to assist participants who want response to a piece of work or an opportunity to think together with others about a child, an aspect of practice, or an issue. The afternoons and evenings are also a time when small groups can delve more deeply into questions that arise out of the major seminar. The small-group work does not have to be connected to the theme of the major seminar. In this way, the afternoons and evenings accommodate the need of participants to work on material that is important to them whether or not it has a place in the major seminar.

ENROLLMENT

The Institute on Descriptive Inquiry draws a mix of returnees and new participants. The Institute extends a warm welcome to new participants. If you are a potential newcomer and have questions about any aspect of the Institute, please contact Cecelia Traugh.

Preference will be given to those who enroll for the full two weeks, but we can sometimes make arrangements for people who can only attend the first week. It is also possible for those who have projects of their own to arrange a schedule that will allow for work on their project in lieu of the major seminar. (Please contact Cecelia Traugh if you are considering attending only one week or arranging a special schedule.)

BRINGING MATERIALS

If you are interested in bringing materials for a study of a child or of teaching practice, please contact Cecelia Traugh. Participants are encouraged to bring material from their classrooms or work settings. While some participants have specific projects they are working on, others come with loose collections of children's work, documentation of activities or curriculum, journals, or the like.

LOCATION AND ACCOMMODATIONS

The Institute takes place at Bennington College, Bennington, VT. Rooms are single occupancy; bathroom facilities are shared. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served at the College dining hall.

FEES AND CREDITS

The Institute fee is \$850, which includes breakfast, lunch and dinner at Bennington College. If you live off campus, there is a fee of \$150. Scholarships are available for up to half of the cost for 3-5 participants. Please contact Cecelia Traugh for more information on scholarship aid.

Three credits can be earned through The Graduate School, Antioch New England. These credits cost an additional \$300. Please indicate on your enrollment form if you are interested in credits.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To enroll in the Institute, please return the attached enrollment form with a non-refundable \$100 deposit by **May 15, 2011. This year we must have enrollments by this date in order to hold space in the dormitory.** The balance of the fee may be paid at any time prior to the Institute, but is due upon arrival at the Institute. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis. Applicants will receive confirmation on receipt of their application. A letter describing the content of the Institute in more detail, what to bring, etc. will be sent in April.

The Institute on Descriptive Inquiry, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its admissions policies or practices.

The enrollment process is being handled by Marita Downes in the School of Education at Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus. Please make your check payable to Long Island University and send it with the enrollment form to:

Marita Downes
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1 University Plaza
Brooklyn, NY 11201-5372
Tel: 718-488-1378 Fax: 718-488-3472
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Questions should be addressed to Cecelia Traugh:

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