

Bennington College, Vermont/ July 27 to August 9, 2008



Prospect **SUMMER** Institute On Descriptive Inquiry

WHAT DO WE HOLD DEAR IN TEACHING?

. . . Learning which came from a group effort was superior to learning achieved through individual efforts.
*Myles Horton, *The Long Haul**

Prospect's Summer Institute on Descriptive Inquiry has convened every year since 1978 to engage in learning that comes from a group effort. Participants are educators, parents, and others who wish to examine issues of teaching and learning from the unique perspective that Prospect offers.

Prospect's political stance is strong and radical. ALL children (and all people) are able to think and to learn—not just some. By choosing to attend this Institute, you can join your experience, ideas, and questions with those of other educators who share a dedication to an educational vision that starts and builds from children's and teachers' strengths.



Lake Paran



The Quarry



Music At Marlboro



MASS MOCA



Clark Museum



Williamstown Theater Festival

MORE ABOUT THE INSTITUTE:

Participants in Prospect's Summer Institute on Descriptive Inquiry are educators, parents, and others who wish to examine issues of teaching and learning from the unique perspective that Prospect offers. Participants are expected to have some familiarity with Prospect Descriptive Processes, either through attendance at other Prospect institutes or through participation in groups that use the Descriptive Processes in their work.

While some educators return to the Institute from year to year, Prospect extends a warm welcome to newcomers. Prospect's top priority is to expand and diversify participation in all its institutes and conferences. 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 questions of the Institute. It meets each morning and two afternoons. We begin the Institute with spanning studies of children and teaching. These are conducted by participants who bring documentary materials for these studies to the Institute. Following these studies, we will move into a focused look at observing and describing, paying particular attention to what we learn through descriptive inquiry and questions about process that arise through the spanning studies. Alongside this work, we will read a chapter from *Seeing Like a State* by Scott.

In the first two days of our second week we will read a shared text. This year we will read portions of *In a Shade of Blue* by Eddie Glaude, Jr. Finally, we will form small groups around a range of readings and other media. The exact list of books has not yet been selected. However, we do know it will include novels, poetry and non-fiction.

In the 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 draws a mix of returnees and new participants. Prospect extends a warm welcome to new participants to the Institute. 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 one 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.

BRINGING MATERIALS

If you are interested in bringing materials for a spanning 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 \$800, which includes breakfast 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, 2008. 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 by the end of May. A letter describing the content of the Institute in more detail, what to bring, etc. will be sent in late April or May.

Prospect Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its admissions policies or practices.

This year 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
School of Education
1 University Plaza
Brooklyn, NY 11201-5372
Tel: 718-488-1378 Fax: 718-488-3472
e-mail: marita.downes@liu.edu

Further questions should be addressed to Cecelia Traugh at:

e-mail: Cecelia.traugh@liu.edu
work phone: 718 488 1088
home phone: 914 964 8219



Art by (Oscar), from the Prospect Archives

PROSPECT SUMMER INSTITUTE ON DESCRIPTIVE INQUIRY
July 27-August 9, 2008

ENROLLMENT FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail address: _____

Place of work: _____

Work address: _____

Work phone: _____

I am interested in earning credits from Antioch College.

If you are interested in doing a spanning study of a child or a Description of Work and Art of Teaching related to the major seminar, please contact Cecelia Traugh as soon as possible.

If you know now that you will want to have a small afternoon inquiry group, please describe the topic and/or materials below:

Please make your \$100 non-refundable deposit check payable to Long Island University and send it with the enrollment form to: Marita Downes, School of Education, 1 University Plaza, Brooklyn, NY 11201-5372; Tel: 718-488-1378 Fax: 718-488-3472; [e-mail-marita.downes@liu.edu](mailto:marita.downes@liu.edu). Further questions should be addressed to Cecelia Traugh at: e-mail: Cecelia.traugh@liu.edu; work phone: 718 488 1088; home phone: 914 964 8219