



PROSPECT ARCHIVES AND CENTER FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

SUMMER INSTITUTE ON DESCRIPTIVE INQUIRY

The Multiplicities of Democracy II Locating, designing, maintaining spaces for democratic community

July 30 - August 12, 2006
Bennington, Vermont

Democracy as a personal, an individual, way of life involves nothing fundamentally new. But when applied it puts a new practical meaning in old ideas. Put into effect it signifies that powerful present enemies of democracy can be successfully met only by the creation of personal attitudes in individual human beings; that we must get over our tendency to think that its defense can be found in any external means whatever, whether military or civil, if they are separated from individual attitudes so deep-seated as to constitute personal character.

--John Dewey, "Creative Democracy--The Task Before Us"

Join this summer in a collaborative inquiry to explore these questions:

What if education were conceived of as making visible the person and the power of the person?

How do we recognize both the individual and the community? How can we honor and build from the multiplicities that exist within every community?

What are the responsibilities of the participants who engage in descriptive inquiry to its subjects and to the larger educational context?

Among other threads, this summer's Institute will explore:

Preserving and developing ideas and practices different from the current norm; thinking about de-schooling school

Creating educational spaces where children and older students can be known and can see themselves as learners in the context of testing and an emphasis on abstract learning

Studying the evolution and varied uses of Prospect's Descriptive Processes

Reclaiming the language of democracy and spirit in education

Prospect's political message 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.

MORE ABOUT THE INSTITUTE:

Prospect's Summer Institute on Descriptive Inquiry has convened every year since 1978. Participants 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. This year we will pay particular attention to issues and questions about process that arise through the spanning studies.

Following these studies, we will do close reading of a shared text related to the theme of the Institute. This year we will be reading an essay by Paulo Freire: "Cultural action for freedom." In the second week, we move into a focused look at designing and maintaining democratic communities. We will read Miles Horton, *The Long Haul*, as the basis for this portion of our study. Finally, we will form small groups around a range of readings. The following is the list of books from which participants can choose:

John Hope Franklin: *Mirror to America: The autobiography of John Hope Franklin*

Vivian Gornick: *The Solitude of Self: Thinking about Elizabeth Cady Stanton*

Marilynne Robinson: *Housekeeping*

Mike Rose: *The Mind at Work: Valuing the Intelligence of the American Worker*

James C. Scott: *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*

In the letter that comes to registered participants, readings to accompany these books 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.

An additional opportunity

The Prospect Board is in the process of restructuring/decentralizing its work and is examining the role it will play in supporting the activities and services Prospect has sponsored since the seventies. In conjunction with this work, there will be opportunities during the 2006 Summer Institute on Descriptive Inquiry for interested participants to explore ways to sustain the work of the Summer Institutes in the coming years. We will plan a series of sessions during the small group times at Institute 2 in order to do this work together.

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 and dinner are served at the College dining hall. Participants are responsible for providing their own lunches. There is a small kitchen in each dormitory and Institute participants run a lunch co-op for those who wish to join.

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, 2006. 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 does not discriminate on the basis of race, sexuality, gender, gender expression and identity, age, ability, religion, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its admissions policies or practices.

Please make your check payable to PROSPECT CENTER and send it with the enrollment form to:

Rhonda Rosenburg, Assistant to the Board
Prospect Center, Box 328
North Bennington, VT 05257
Tel: 802 442 8333 Fax: 802-442-9444
www.prospectcenter.org



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 30-August 12, 2006

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 PROSPECT CENTER and send it with the enrollment form to: Rhonda Rosenburg, Assistant to the Board; Prospect Center, Box 328; North Bennington, VT 05257; Tel: 802 442 8333 Fax: 802-442-9444; www.prospectcenter.org 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

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