

# BUZZARDS BAY WRITING PROJECT

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## Visioning Retreat 2009

By Laura Hunt

A severe winter weather warning threatened that up to ten inches of snow could be dumped on BBWP's second Visioning Retreat, held January 10–11. Even that was not enough to discourage eighteen hardy buzzards from taking wing to Whispering Pines in West Greenwich, Rhode Island for a weekend of collegiality and tasty treats. Thankfully, Mother Nature's performance was sub-par, delivering little more than a dusting. The Buzzards, on the other hand, exceeded expectations and walked away with a renewed sense of energy and several solid action plans for developing the Project's continuity in leadership.

Representatives from each of the six cohorts were first grouped by cohort year to reflect on their own ISI experiences. Graphic representations of

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the cohorts were as diverse as the groups themselves, ranging from an atomic bomb to an ever-expanding home. The strengths and challenges of the ISI that each cohort identified set the stage for a lively discussion of what steps could be taken to improve that aspect of our site. Each representative was then given time to read and reflect on a NWP monograph highlighting the continuity work of another site. Following lunch, representatives were shuffled into new groupings to begin turning their individual ideas into collective ISI action plans. New leaders emerged

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Advanced Institute Planned for Summer

By Adele Dockendorff

Based on the success of last year's Advanced Institute, the decision has been made to plan a second Advanced Institute for this summer. Similar to the model used last year, the Advanced Institute will be a two week course that delves into a specific concept and explores its relationship to writing instruction. The institute, Reseeing Instruction Through Making Learning Visible and Metacognition, can be taken for credits or PDPs. This summer, Adele Dockendorff will be leading

the Advanced Institute through the first two weeks of August. The schedule will be structured so participants spend some of their time in a classroom setting, but also off-site on planned field trips. There will be an evening of introduction in June and final presentations will take place on August 18<sup>th</sup>.

This summer's Advanced Institute will model the theory of "Making Learning Visible" and will use a variety of metacognitive reflection strategies. Teachers will actively engage in a unit of study exploring the concept of rocks through many

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## The Buzzards Have Finally Flown to Facebook

By Reade and Beth Whinnem

At our last visioning retreat we discussed the desire to stay connected with our past TCs as well as attract new fellows. Since e-anthology can only be used during the ISI, we wanted to try something different. We decided on Facebook. Facebook not only allows us to post news about upcoming events, it offers a forum for sharing our writing and offering feedback. It also provides an opportunity to check in with friends and colleagues at the BBWP.

As teachers, we have all been told about the horrors and downfalls of Facebook. However, when used intelligently, Facebook is not only benign, it's a lot of fun. You make connections (friends) with whomever you choose, and you can set up your account so that only your friends can interact with you. You make it what you want it to be, nothing more and nothing less.

### To register on Facebook:

- Go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).
- Fill in the essential information (Name, email, etc.) and select a password.
- You will be asked to put in a code. (This ensures that your computer isn't possessed and running programs late at night while you sleep. Seriously. You'd be surprised.)
- Facebook will send you an email with a link to confirm your membership (again, to ensure your authorization).
- Once you confirm your membership, you will be asked for some profile information, all of which is optional. However, giving a few details about yourself may help you find some long lost friends.
- Eventually, you will find yourself at your "Home Page" where you can...well...play. Find people. Post pictures. Talk about yourself. Set your "status." Or don't. It's up to you.
- You can play around with your "Profile" by clicking

at the top of the page. You can fill in all sorts of stuff about yourself under "info." Or you can pretend you're a famous dead writer and use their information. It would be a weird thing to do, but it's your Facebook playroom.

### To avoid all children on Facebook...

- Once you have confirmed your membership, go to "Settings" in the upper right-hand corner.
- Click on "Privacy Settings" (the second one down).
- Click on "Profile" and select "only friends" straight on down the list. (This means that only people you confirm as friends will be able to see your info.)
- Click on "Search" and select "only friends" (again, this limits who can find you.)

We strongly recommend strict settings at first. That way you can control your Facebook experience. Feel free to do as you would like. Having strict settings may impede meeting up with people from your past (though perhaps you want that too!).

### To become an official Facebook Buzzard...

- Type in "BBWP" in the white box at the top right corner where it says "Search."
- Buzzards Bay Writing Project should come up.
- Click on "Join Group."
- Click the blue "Buzzards Bay Writing Project" link to check us out. Do not choose "Big Beautiful Women Pageant." That's something else entirely. (Then again, your interests are your business.)

As you spend time on Facebook, you'll become more comfortable with choosing your settings and your profile. You can decide how regularly you want to be contacted or how much you want to share. It is important to remember, though, that nothing online is 100% private. You are joining a network, so you might want to avoid putting up pictures of yourself at the beach with a margarita in one hand and your bikini top in the other. Apart from that, though, log on and join the fun!

*Visioning Retreat* from page 1

who are committed to improving, publicizing, and organizing this year's ISI. Dinner, drumming, and readings followed, further increasing creative energy flow.

The second day of the retreat was dedicated to discovering ways to identify and develop new leaders within the site. Each representative reflected on his or her own role as a leader, then worked collaboratively to develop continuity in leadership plans. Four plans were presented with several common themes running throughout.

Paramount to moving our site forward, it was agreed, is the need to stay connected with ISI fellows using a variety of communication methods. Leadership opportunities must be identified early and often, and all TC's encouraged to participate in the site's activities in whatever capacity they feel most comfortable. Each participant assumed a leadership role in a new or existing initiative as a result of attending the retreat. Overall, the momentum created for moving our site forward was well worth the effort expended to weather a winter storm.

*Advanced Institute* from page 1

different lenses. This unit of study will serve as a metaphor for the learning mentality and vision necessary to carry out this pedagogy in one's professional practice. While studying rocks, participants will *experience* and *reflect* on the instructional design based on the pedagogy of "Making Learning Visible." They will also investigate the effects of metacognitive reflections on learning itself as they engage in their own metacognitive journals in response to their own learning. Participants will use these metacognitive reflections as a basis for discussion on the theory's value and possible incorporations into classroom instruction and professional development programs. Ultimately, participants will "re-see" instruction and learning through the lens of "Making Learning Visible" and will also learn how to adapt these strategies into their own classroom practice. To conclude, participants will revise a unit of their choice by incorporating these strategies into their instructional design and professional practice.

TC's will be receiving registration information very soon. If you would like more information about "Making Learning Visible" visit the following website: [www.pz.harvard.edu/mlv](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/mlv)

### BBWP Book Club

On March 14, the first meeting of the Professional Book Club was held at Russell and Dorothea Maynard's home in Swansea. Six BBWP members were in attendance to discuss Sondra Perl's *On Austrian Soil*. They paid special attention to the parts of the book which speak to all educators. Though participants shared different impressions of the book, all concluded that it was both an engaging and inspirational story. For our next book, we will read *The Courage to Teach* by Parker Palmer. The tentative meeting date is Saturday, May 16. All are invited.

### BECOME A MASTER PRESENTER

For  
6 + 1 Writing Traits

Attend the BBWP Professional Development Program  
July 22, 23, and 29, 2009

If you are interested,  
contact Diana Grady at  
[badg2@verizon.net](mailto:badg2@verizon.net)

# Saturday Seminar

May 9, 2009

8:30 a.m–11:30 a.m.\*

Location: Fairhaven, 200 Mill Street

Presentation by Diana Grady

## *Massachusetts's Authors as Writing Inspiration*

This seminar will focus on literature written by Massachusetts authors. Participants will be introduced to some of this literature and how it can be used in the classroom to inspire students' writing. Come ready to be inspired and to write.

Ten PDP's will be given for attendance at three seminars and fifteen PDP's will be given for attendance at four seminars.

\*Coffee and pastries will be served.

(Remember to bring a book to participate in the book swap.)

## Calendar of Events

April 11	9:30	Leadership Team Meeting
May 2	9:30	Leadership Team Meeting
May 9	8:30-11:30	Saturday Seminar: <i>Massachusetts's Authors as Writing Inspiration</i>
June 6	9:30	Leadership Team Meeting
June 29, 30		Invitational Summer Institute Intensive
June 29		2 <sup>nd</sup> Advanced Institute Introduction

Please contact Kit if you have questions about any of the events listed above.