Chapter 5

Dr. Theresa J. Kiley, Consultant and Volunteer Literacy Tutor

A few years after I came to Bradley University in the fall of 1990, I became interested in professional development schools (PDS), and much of my research focused on that topic. In 1996, I served as a member of the Kemper Executive Committee. In concert with that appointment, I was selected to serve as the PDS site coordinator for Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center from December 1996 through June 1997, and again from May 1998 through December 1998. This was very exciting for me because I had been involved in the school’s initial planning and design in 1991 and 1992.

Less than one mile from Bradley’s campus, Valeska Hinton opened on August 25, 1993 (Lyman, 2000). Many of our Bradley alumni were interested in teaching at this new and innovative school, and we were able to place Bradley novice and student teachers in this model facility with cooperating teachers who had graduated from Bradley’s early childhood teacher education program. Due to Bradley’s clinical experience and PDS connections, I was allowed to teach some of Bradley’s early childhood teaching methods courses at Valeska Hinton in the evenings. I was also allowed to use the school’s model classroom to provide both Bradley and Valeska Hinton students with rich experiential activities. It was the best of both worlds!

In October 1998, I was named Bradley’s third Kemper Fellow, and I began serving in my new leadership role in January 1999. As Kemper Fellow, I continued my PDS work at Valeska Hinton, and more. My new responsibilities included coordinating, planning, and implementing College-wide professional development activities, collaborating with the Bradley’s PDS sites to provide professional development opportunities for PDS faculty and staff, collaborating with Bradley faculty who served as Bradley PDS site coordinators, and soliciting letters of interest in order to select a new Bradley PDS site. By August 1999, I had been serving as Kemper Fellow for eight months.

“The experience of serving as the William T. Kemper Teaching Excellence Fellow is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I have greatly enjoyed the relationships and interactions that I have been able to foster with school partners and college faculty over the past eighteen months.”

~ Dr. Theresa J. Kiley, spring 2000
The 1999-2000 academic year was marked by changes to the Kemper Executive Committee and to Bradley’s PDS sites. Due to participation in a district-wide technology grant, C. B. Smith Primary School had withdrawn from the Bradley PDS partnership at the end of 1998-1999 academic year. So, during the fall 1999 semester the Bradley PDS site coordinators were Dr. Jean Marie Grant for Valeska Hinton; Janet Jackson for Georgetowne Middle School, and Dr. Heljä Robinson for Manual High School. In January 2000, Dr. Mary Ann Manos joined the Kemper Executive Committee as PDS site coordinator for Bradley’s newest PDS site: Roosevelt Magnet School for the Performing Arts, which had been named Bradley’s fifth PDS site in September 1999. Throughout the year, Monica Mueller continued as our Kemper secretary.

PDS Projects at Bradley PDS Sites

Multiple PDS projects were implemented over the course of the 1999-2000 academic year as we continued to include each of the five departments from the College of Education and Health Sciences in our PDS work. At Manual, Dr. Robinson and Dr. Bob Wolfe assisted Sandy Farkash and Rosalind Sievers in piloting a college simulation project for the first time. The project gave Manual students a chance to experience aspects of college such as a lecture, study group, and culminating exam. In the December 1999 Keeping Current with Kemper newsletter, Dr. Robinson explained:

The simulation ‘as if in college’ experiences consisted of many steps; preparation through readings, attendance at two lectures, participation in follow-up study groups, and a culminating exam at the end of the week. Students completed all these requirements in addition to their regular work load at school. This piece of reality gave the students a chance to juggle and organize their time and responsibilities, just as they will have to do in college (p. 2).

The college simulation experience ended with participating students shadowing Bradley students for a day during spring 2000.

At Georgetowne, the focus remained on health. Bradley’s Rob Bertram engaged physical therapy majors in presenting to physical education classes on topics such as bones and muscles, injury prevention, and warm up activities; and Mrs. Jackson assisted principal Pat Callahan in applying for a grant to support prevention of substance abuse and violence. Mrs. Jackson also served on a committee at Georgetowne to facilitate the prevention efforts.
Valeska Hinton staff continued to focus on technology. During fall 1999, Dr. Grant and I helped teachers learn how to use a new computer program called Easy Books Deluxe that made it possible for teachers and students to create their own books. During spring 2000, Valeska Hinton teachers engaged in training to learn more about Microsoft Publisher, Microsoft Works, Microsoft PowerPoint, and KidPix.

At Roosevelt, the focus was on reading. Dr. Manos and teacher education majors enrolled in her ETE 353: Teaching Language Arts in the Elementary Grades course worked closely with teacher Mary Schultz to promote the school’s Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) program. In April 2000, Roosevelt fifth grade students read the book *Chocolate Fever* by Robert Kimmel Smith and completed projects about the book before enjoying a chocolate feast. While these are just a sampling of the projects occurring at Bradley PDS sites during 1999-2000, they highlight the diversity of projects accomplished through the partnership.

**Wisdom from Bob and Heljä**
Debbie Long, Teacher, Georgetowne Middle School

I remember one Saturday morning Bob [Wolfe] and Heljä [Robinson] were holding a workshop in our building. There were about eight or ten of us due to attend. Upon arrival, Bob and Heljä suggested we take a walk around town before beginning our workshop. I figured this was a good way to start the morning and kill a little time! They further clarified they wanted us to walk around town in order to breathe the air. Our questioning looks were given a logical explanation. Bob and Heljä explained to us that since it had stormed the night before, the lightning had caused the air to become ionized. Breathing in ionized air would help our brains function better. Hmm. Who knew? Now, every time I’m out after a storm I think of that moment and breathe deeply.

Bob and Heljä had other suggestions for making the brain function better, but there was one I used for years. They claimed that research showed that the brain functions better with water. So, I got the great idea to purchase a five gallon cooler like you see on construction trucks, freeze a bowl of ice overnight to put in the cooler the next day, and then fill the cooler with water. I did this every day for my sixth grade students from that time on. I purchased cups for each of them over the summer and they were free to get water whenever they wanted. I finally stopped providing ice water two years ago when I moved to seventh/eighth grade and figured it would be a logistics problem to have multiple classes with cups and water!

**Professional Development at Bradley PDS Sites**

Working in collaboration with other Bradley faculty members, the Kemper Executive Committee prepared and presented many professional development workshops at Bradley's PDS sites during 1999-2000. The previous spring, Dr. Celia Johnson, Dr. Robinson, Dr. Rita Jensen, and I had shared a presentation with Valeska Hinton teachers and administrators that featured Bradley early childhood education students’ portfolios, and during the 1999-2000 academic year discussions related to portfolios and portfolio assessments continued. At Georgetowne, Dr. Jensen and I presented a workshop on block scheduling in November 1999; and in January 2000, I conducted a lesson planning workshop for teachers and administrators at Valeska Hinton. At Roosevelt, Dr. Manos provided professional development on team building, reading comprehension, and how to administer an informal reading inventory during the spring 2000 semester; and at Manual, Dr. Wolfe, Dr. Robinson, and teacher Stephanie Long presented a session titled “The Effect of Affect on Academic Success” at the school’s Best Practices Conference in March 2000.
Kemper Teaching Academy

During the 1999-2000 academic year, the Kemper Teaching Academy continued with its exploration of technology. In October 1999, Dr. David McMullen gave an update on the College’s technology initiatives, Dr. Jensen shared suggestions for using technology to support academic advising, and Barbra Kerns provided information about technology support services available at Bradley. In November 1999, Dr. Grant presented “Web-based Course Development” and demonstrated how to design a website. Kemper Teaching Academy participants were also encouraged to create their own professional technology plans. During the spring 2000 semester, we explored different ways technology was used in higher education and learned how to convert syllabi and other course-related documents to html format.

Spreading the Word

We also shared our PDS experiences with local and national groups during 1999-2000. In December 1999, Dean Joan Sattler and I spoke with Peoria Public School District 150’s Board of Education about Bradley’s PDS connections. We shared the goals of the Kemper Project, gave examples of several PDS projects, and discussed the many benefits of our PDS partnerships. Our three District 150 PDS principals, Pat Kellogg from Valeska Hinton, Sandy Farkash from Manual, and Taunya Jenkins from Roosevelt, were in attendance to support us during the presentation, which was very well-received.

Beyond Peoria, we continued to present Bradley’s PDS work at national conferences as well as to publish our findings related to professional development schools. For example, in February 2000, Dr. Sattler and I collaborated with some of Bradley’s PDS principals to present a paper titled “It Takes a Village: Promoting Multidisciplinary Leadership through a PDS Partnership” at the annual meeting of the American Association of
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Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). Our paper was later published (Sattler & Kiley, 2000). In April 2000, Dr. Jensen and I shared another scholarly paper related to work supported by the William T. Kemper Foundation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). “A Professional Development School Staff's Perceptions of Actual and Preferred Learning Environments,” which also was subsequently published, focused on school learning environments and how they can positively and negatively affect teaching and learning (Kiley & Jensen, 2000).

**An Aside**

Shortly after being named Kemper Fellow, I learned that I had breast cancer. As shocking as that news was, I did not want to give up the opportunity to carry out my assigned role, so I decided to continue working through the chemotherapy and radiation treatments. Although it was a difficult season, I was very fortunate to have the support of my colleagues, friends, and family. As it turned out, my PDS connections were part of what kept me going and motivated me to go to work each day. It was so refreshing to be able to walk into Bradley’s PDS sites and connect with the students, teachers, and administrators who always wished me the best.

I served as Bradley’s Kemper Fellow through June 2000, when Dr. Bob Wolfe stepped into the role. Recounting the highlights of my time as a Kemper Fellow has been extremely rewarding and a bit challenging. It has been rewarding because I was so touched when revisiting the letters of support that were written on my behalf so many years ago. It has been challenging because trying to recall the events and details 16 years later has been somewhat daunting. Looking in the rearview mirror has helped me to appreciate the many opportunities that I was provided as a Kemper Fellow.


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A Spirit of Cooperation
Dr. Rosalyn Anstine Templeton, Kemper Fellow 1997-1998

With the Kemper Project, there was a definite spirit of working together at all levels to resolve concerns and provide support. For example, when members of the Kemper Executive Committee voiced concerns about additional expenses associated with delivering in-services at Bradley’s PDS sites, Dean Sattler agreed that a token of appreciation was warranted even though we were operating on a shoestring budget. Therefore, gift certificates were offered to presenters for each in-service delivered. When teachers at Valeska Hinton wanted to be more involved with Bradley’s novice and student teacher placement process, Principal Ken Hinton worked with Valeska Hinton’s PDS site coordinator and Bradley’s Dr. Starr Hull to facilitate a system that included cooperating teachers’ input. When Georgetowne principal Pat Callahan expressed concern about the lack of counseling available to his middle school students, he worked with Dr. Nancy Sherman to provide a Bradley counseling intern at Georgetowne for ten hours each week. And at C. B. Smith, when a new principal told Dr. Celia Johnson that Bradley tuition certificates had been discovered unused and expired, the date on the certificates was extended for another semester so that teachers could use them toward graduate coursework at Bradley. This spirit of cooperation made my involvement with the Kemper Project a great collaborative experience.

References
