

Chapter 14

Change is in the Air: 2008-2009

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The 2008-2009 academic year brought many changes for the Kemper Professional Development Schools (PDS) Project. However, one consistent was Dr. Heljä Antola Crowe as the Kemper Fellow. Under Dr. Antola Crowe's leadership, the remaining Kemper Coordinator Council members consisted of Dr. Sherrie Pardieck, Bradley PDS site coordinator for Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center; Dr. Cecile Arquette, Bradley PDS site coordinator for Whittier Primary School; and myself, Dr. Patricia Nugent, Bradley PDS site coordinator for Manual High School. In addition to her role as Kemper Fellow, Dr. Antola Crowe served as the Bradley PDS site coordinator for Roosevelt Magnet School for the Performing Arts. Shawna Beard joined the council as our graduate assistant and Helen Hagen continued as our administrative support person and newsletter editor.

Although there were only three minor personnel changes within the Kemper Coordinator Council, the personnel changes at Bradley's four PDS sites were much more formidable. Prior to the start of the 2008-2009 academic year, three of the four Bradley PDS principals had moved into new leadership positions. Specifically, Dr. Sharon Desmoulin-Kherat was the new principal at Manual, Renee Andrews was the new principal at Whittier, and Magnolia "Noly" Branscumb was the new principal at Roosevelt. In the Fall Semester 2008 *Keeping Current with Kemper* newsletter, Dr. Antola Crowe wrote, "Change can bring about a breath of fresh air in routines, relieving us from boredom and stagnation. When change occurs, we change in actions, in social relationships, but the hardest of all, in our sense of self" (p. 1). Dr. Antola Crowe's words reflect the overall background for the majority of Bradley's PDS family during the 2008-2009 academic year. Despite all of the change, several Bradley PDS projects continued from previous years and several new projects were launched.

"The 2008-2009 academic year was indeed a time for reorientation. But whatever disorientation may have occurred, one thing stood firm throughout the year: the strong PDS relationships between and among Bradley University and its four PDS sites."

~ Dr. Patricia Nugent, Bradley PDS Site Coordinator for Manual, 2008-2009

Fall 2008

In addition to the change in leadership at Manual, there was also a new configuration for the school. In August 2008, an article published in Peoria's *InterBusiness Issues* magazine announced Manual's plans to restructure into a talent development high school based on a model developed at Johns Hopkins University in 1994 (Groh, 2008). The transition was expected to take place over the next three to five years, but Manual hit the ground running right away. By the first day of school in August 2008, Manual had transformed from a high school serving grades nine through 12 into middle and high school that served grades seven through 12.



One section of the newly-restructured school was specifically designated for students in the seventh and eighth grades. Ninth graders occupied a neighboring section of the school, and the remaining tenth through twelfth grade students inhabited the remainder of the building. In addition, professional learning communities (PLCs) were established for Manual teachers by grade level for seventh, eighth, and ninth grade teachers, and based on content expertise for tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade teachers. As the Bradley PDS site coordinator for Manual, I worked with the tenth through twelfth grade mathematics department PLC. In addition to PLC membership by content or grade level taught, each PLC had a designated special needs faculty member, such as a special education teacher or a counselor. The Manual PLCs met each day during a

specified time period. One day of the week was a designated Standards Aligned Curriculum (SAC) day, where each PLC collaborated to ensure that what they were teaching aligned with the Illinois learning standards. Examples of work accomplished by the PLCs the other four days of the week included positive approaches to student discipline and collaborative lesson planning. One of the important goals of Manual's PLC work was to decrease teachers' feelings of professional isolation.

Meanwhile, at Roosevelt and Whittier, Bradley students continued gaining authentic experiences in elementary and middle-level classrooms. During the fall 2008 semester, two novice teachers were placed at Roosevelt, and both were interviewed about their experiences for the Fall Semester 2008 *Keeping Current with Kemper* newsletter. Kelly Zibton, who was placed in



Beth Montgomery's fifth grade classroom, reported learning techniques and strategies for classroom management, cultural diversity issues, and techniques for teaching a topic in multiple ways. Some specific strategies Ms. Zibton learned during her novice teaching clinical experience at Roosevelt were how to provide students with hands on learning opportunities and how to use technology in the classroom. Bradley novice teacher Latanya Moore, who worked with Jennifer Jacobs in a sixth grade classroom at Roosevelt, reported learning innovative ways to teach math as well as diversity within types of student learning.

At Whittier, three Bradley students completed their student teaching during the fall 2008 semester. Carly Nelson was assigned to Lynne Anderson-Loy's third grade classroom where she and her students created "gallon guys and gals" in mathematics and studied Native Americans in social studies. Pila Ortiz, another Bradley student teacher, reflected, "The children really make this a one-of-a-kind experience, and I will miss them so much when I leave in December" (*Keeping Current with Kemper*, Fall Semester 2008, p. 6). Finally, Jennifer Weldon, who completed her student teaching experience in a second grade classroom at Whittier, stated, "It is essential to have a plan; moreover one must be flexible and realize that every day may not go exactly how you want it." It is obvious from these statements that all five of these soon-to-be-teachers enjoyed engaging and educational novice and student teaching experiences at two of Bradley's PDS sites.

"Being able to include Whittier as a PDS partner was welcomed by everyone involved, especially since the school, which was located only two blocks from campus, already had a longstanding working relationship with Bradley."

~ Dr. Cecile Arquette, Bradley PDS Site Coordinator for Whittier, 2006-2010

Student-centered, creative projects at Roosevelt and Whittier during the fall 2008 semester included a hands on sculpture workshop at Roosevelt based on the artistic works



Whittier students wrote, illustrated, and published their own books in December 2008.

of world-renowned sculptor Henry Moore, and a book publishing project at Whittier. The first project, which was planned and implemented by art teacher Barb Unes with assistance from Bradley art student Christine Montgomery, provided an opportunity for Roosevelt students to carve sculptures from half gallon-sized blocks of cement, vermiculite, and water that had been prepared by Mrs. Unes and four student helpers the afternoon before. The second project, which was planned and implemented by Dr. Arquette, engaged every student at Whittier in writing a book. Students in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade classrooms created collaborative class books. Students in second, third and fourth

grade classrooms created individual books. The student-written and illustrated books were professionally printed and bound with hard covers by Student Treasures Publishing.

At Valeska Hinton, the focus was on social studies and science during the fall 2008 semester. As the United States population flocked to the polls in November 2008, so did Valeska Hinton students. The students learned about the two Presidential candidates, Senator John McCain and Senator Barack Obama, and about our country's voting system.

Students also created voting booths, ballots (including pictures), and posters to encourage everyone to vote. On Tuesday, November 4, 2008 Valeska Hinton students cast their votes, and the winner was announced at the end of the day.

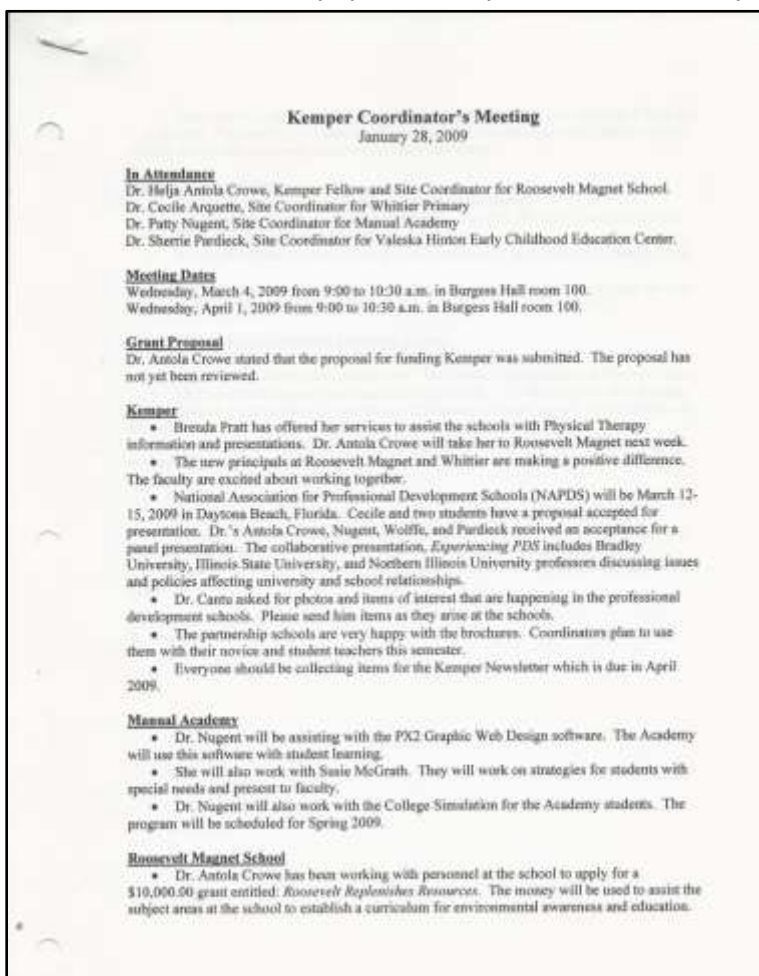
Amidst the excitement of the Presidential election, a group of environmentally conscious Valeska Hinton faculty members who called themselves the Naturalists placed a worm farm at the end of the hallway in each of the school's four villages. The worm farms, which contained red worms, were designed to answer author Richard Louv's call to integrate nature into the school curricula (Louv, 2005). In addition, the Naturalists continued to collect paper for recycling. Moreover, a cohort of Valeska Hinton teachers working on master's degrees in curriculum and instruction through Bradley University continued their studies during the fall 2008 semester. The cohort, which started in fall 2007, required participating teachers to take one graduate course each semester. During fall 2008, the cohort completed Dr. Antola Crowe's ETE 651: Curriculum Theory and Development course.

Spring 2009

Spring 2009 started off on a great note as a new Kemper grant proposal was approved. This funding by the William T. Kemper Foundation-Commerce Bank, Trustee marked a renewed commitment to the school-university partnership work of Bradley's College of Education and Health Sciences that had started in 1995. Throughout the spring 2009 semester, Bradley's four PDS sites continued to accentuate the positive in their various partnership activities.

In February 2009, a health center was established at Manual in conjunction with Methodist Medical Center. It was reported that the center was the first of its kind to be opened at a Peoria area high school. The health center was staffed with a social worker, a nurse practitioner, and an administrative assistant. By the end of the spring 2009 semester, the center was reportedly seeing approximately 20 patients per day. During its first semester in operation, the center was only open to Manual students and staff, but it would soon serve the neighboring community as well.

There were many occasions to celebrate at Roosevelt during the spring 2009 semester. When Roosevelt received an Illinois Spotlight School Award the previous fall, Dr. Christopher Koch, the Illinois State Superintendent of Education, wrote Principal Branscumb a letter that stated, "I commend you and your staff for the hard work and effort that allows your students to succeed academically. We encourage you to celebrate your success and share the good news with students, parents





and all community" (p. 1). Additionally, Cathy Godhigh, an administrative assistant at Roosevelt, published a children's book titled *Back Porch Watermelon* (Godhigh, 2006). Written by Ms. Godhigh and illustrated by Victoria Glover, the book was based on the author's experiences with her grandfather when she was a child.

Numerous Bradley pre-service teachers were placed at Roosevelt for clinical experiences during spring 2009. In the Spring Semester 2009 issue of the *Keeping Current with Kemper* newsletter, Bradley novice teacher Mike Morris stated, "My mindset of only teaching in a high school setting when I graduate has changed dramatically after this extremely rewarding experience at Roosevelt Magnet School" (p. 3).

Many Bradley pre-service teachers enjoyed successful clinical experiences at other Bradley PDS sites as well. During spring 2009, five Bradley

pre-service teachers completed their student teaching experiences at Whittier. In Dr. Arquette's words, "Whittier's doors are always open to BU students for early field experiences, tutoring opportunities and volunteer work" (*Keeping Current with Kemper*, Spring Semester 2009, p. 7). Three Bradley student teachers worked and learned at Valeska Hinton during the spring 2009 semester. One of them, Nicole Bruno, worked in a kindergarten classroom with teacher Julie McGrath and paraprofessional Karen Jackson. Nicole also helped with Whiz Kids, Valeska Hinton's after school program, and assisted in the folk arts classroom. About her student teaching experience, Nicole reflected, "After my experiences at Valeska, I feel confident in myself as a teacher and ready to have a classroom of my own" (*Keeping Current with Kemper*, Spring Semester 2009, p. 6).

True to the 2008-2009 Kemper PDS Project's unspoken theme of change, Valeska Hinton principal Dr. Beth Bussan retired in May 2009. Dr. Bussan had been in her leadership role at Valeska Hinton for five years. In the Spring Semester 2009 *Keeping Current with Kemper* newsletter, Dr. Pardieck wrote:

Throughout the years, Dr. Bussan has been a true advocate for students, families, teachers, and the community. We will miss her loving touch and her energetic spirit... She leaves with our love, and we wish her much joy and success with all her new endeavors (p. 6).

Soon, one of Dr. Bussan's new endeavors became teaching for Bradley's Department of Teacher Education.

Kemper Teaching Academy and PDS Scholarly Work

In addition to the many projects taking place at Bradley's PDS sites, professional learning and scholarly work was also an important part of the Kemper PDS Project during 2008-2009. The first Kemper Teaching Academy of the year, themed "Learning in the Global Community," was held on September 23, 2008. Thirty-eight Bradley PDS stakeholders, including faculty, staff, administrators, and students, attended the event, which included lunch, a performance by the Roosevelt Peace Troupe, and comments by a variety of Bradley students who were from, or had recently traveled to, other countries. Ashley Lowe and Jaclyn Lewinsohn spoke about Australia, Andrea Wiebmer spoke about Denmark, and Cynthia Belcin spoke about England. In addition to the Bradley student speakers, Dr. Arquette spoke about her many international experiences, as did Sun Ligang, a new-to-Whittier teacher who had recently moved to the United States from Shandong Province, China.

In October 2008, Dr. Antola Crowe and I attended the Children, Youth, and Social Control in Transformation Conference at University of Jyväskylä, in Jyväskylä, Finland. Our presentation, titled "Transforming School Culture: Developing a Culture of Caring in an Urban School," focused on the continuum of experiences that challenge students in urban school environments as well as the adults working with them. Specifically, we presented information pertaining to how the environment at Manual had been impacted by the school's restructuring efforts. Our international presentation led to the writing of a scholarly article titled "Vignettes of a Caring Culture in an Urban School" with Manual's Dr. Valeria Evans-Pierce. Our article was published in 2013 (Nugent, Antola Crowe, & Evans-Pierce, 2013). Around the same time, Dr. Pardieck, Dr. Antola Crowe, Valeska Hinton's Ann Bond, and I drafted a manuscript about Bradley's Comprehensive Integrated Services Model. This manuscript was published in 2011 (Pardieck, Antola Crowe, Nugent, & Bond, 2011).

A few weeks after our return from Finland, the fall's second Kemper Teaching Academy was held in Bradley's Hartman Performing Arts Center, Founders' Room. Co-planned with the College's Center for Research and Service (CRS), the theme of this luncheon was "Learning in the Global Community through Research, Service, and Collaboration." This time, the program featured presentations by each department within the College to illustrate community-based and international activities conducted by Bradley faculty, staff, and students throughout the fall semester.

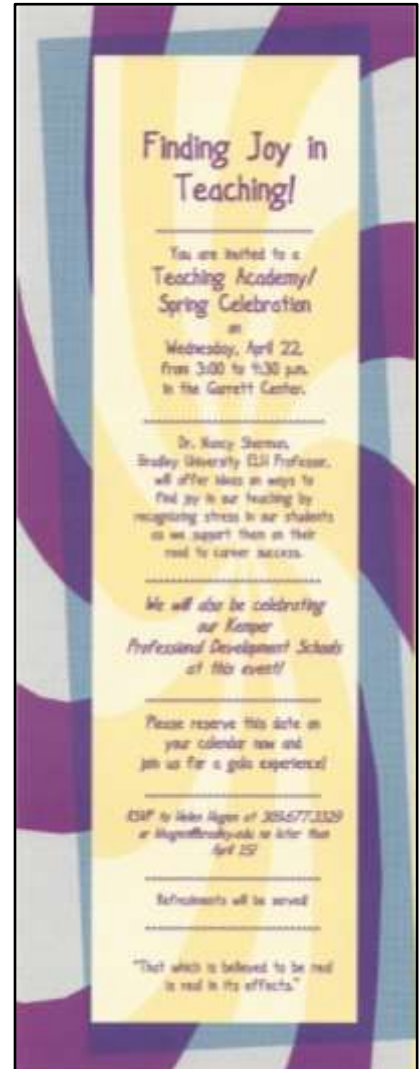


In March 2009, seven Bradley students and faculty attended the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) Conference in Daytona Beach, Florida.

In March 2009, the National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) Conference was held in Daytona Beach, Florida, and several Bradley PDS stakeholders were able to attend. In addition to Dr. Antola Crowe, Dr. Arquette, Dr. Pardieck, Dr. Bob Wolffe, and me, two Bradley pre-service teachers, Jamie Taylor and Erin Nichols, co-presented at the conference with Dr. Arquette. Their presentation, titled "Dialogue Journaling at a PDS: Preservice Teachers Write with Elementary Students in a Professional Development School," reported on a three-year research project at Whittier that focused on using writing journals to support the learning of university students, teachers, and elementary students.

On April 22, 2009, the PDS Spring Celebration and third Kemper Teaching Academy of the year were held in Bradley's Garrett Cultural Center. The theme of this event was "Joy in Teaching and Learning," and the main speaker was Dr. Nancy Sherman from Bradley's Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development. Dr. Sherman shared ideas on how to enjoy working in our educational settings. She also provided insight in how to recognize signs of stress in students. In addition to Dr. Sherman's presentation, each Bradley PDS site coordinator shared the year's highlights for their Bradley PDS sites.

As Dr. Antola Crowe wrote in the Fall Semester 2008 *Keeping Current with Kemper* newsletter, "Change requires some time for reorientation, after a period of disorientation. This is when co-workers and colleagues are really needed to build a support system where change is possible" (p. 1). From the changes in leadership at Bradley's four PDS sites to the major restructuring efforts at Manual to the retirement of Dr. Bussan, the 2008-2009 academic year was indeed a time for reorientation. But whatever disorientation may have occurred, one thing stood firm throughout the year: the strong PDS relationships between and among Bradley University and its four PDS sites.



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