

Chapter 13

Teaching, Learning, and Leadership: 2007-2008

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The 2007-2008 academic year brought Bradley University and its professional development school (PDS) partners a host of new teaching, learning, and leadership experiences. Throughout the year, the Kemper Coordinator Council (formerly the Kemper Executive Committee) met monthly to identify and support PDS projects and initiatives at Bradley's four PDS sites and also at Bradley.

During the fall 2007 semester, Dr. Heljä Antola Crowe was the Kemper Fellow, and the Kemper Coordinator Council members were Dr. Cecile Arquette, Bradley PDS site coordinator for Whittier Primary School; Dr. Shari Britner, Bradley PDS site coordinator for Roosevelt Magnet School for the Performing Arts; Dr. Patricia Nugent, Bradley PDS site coordinator for Manual High School; and myself, Dr. Sherrie Pardieck, Bradley PDS site coordinator for Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center. Dr. Bob Wolffe served on the council as an at-large member, Helen Hagen was the Kemper secretary and editor of the *Keeping Current with Kemper* newsletter, and Carrie VanDyke was our Kemper graduate assistant. During the spring 2008 semester, the council's Kemper PDS roles remained the same with one exception: I stepped in as Kemper Fellow from January 2008 to May 2008 while Dr. Antola Crowe was on sabbatical.

"As in previous years of the Kemper PDS Project, the Kemper Fellow and Bradley PDS site coordinators were closely involved in decision-making, communication, and school improvement planning based on the needs of Bradley's four PDS sites."

~ Dr. Sherrie Pardieck, Bradley PDS site coordinator for Valeska Hinton, 2004-2012

As in previous years of Bradley's Kemper PDS Project, the Kemper Fellow and the Bradley PDS site coordinators were closely involved in decision-making, communication, and school improvement planning based on the needs of Bradley's four PDS sites. As a result of conversations with our Bradley PDS partners, the following Kemper PDS goals continued into the 2007-2008 academic year: 1) To provide special opportunities for the community of leaders to collaborate and to develop their skills in a living laboratory within area neighborhoods and the university, 2) To support and improve student achievement from pre-kindergarten through higher education, 3) To promote best practices methods through professional development, and 4) To develop and encourage collaborative, action research

to improve practice. With these common PDS goals in mind, each Bradley PDS site pursued various directions.

Manual High School

During the 2007-2008 academic year, Manual and Bradley had been Kemper PDS partners for approximately ten years. In October 2007, 25 Manual seniors participated once



Visiting Manual students observed Janet Jackson during a Bradley nursing lab in November 2007.

again in the first phase of the annual college simulation project. The fall 2007 "college course" was a mathematics course about graph theory and Euler circuits, taught by Dr. Nugent and facilitated by Dr. Antola Crowe and Carrie Vandyke. In November 2007, the Manual students who successfully completed the course visited Bradley's campus to shadow a Bradley student going to his or her daily classes and labs. In the afternoon, the visiting students attended a presentation on how to apply for college, including how to complete a college application form.

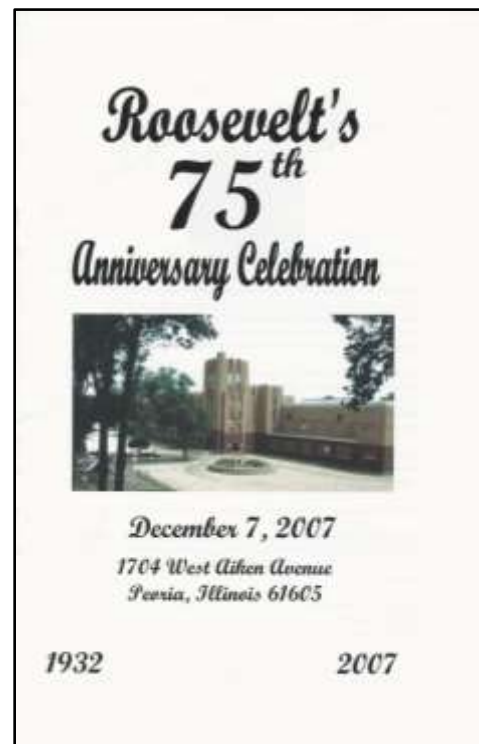
During spring 2008, Manual incorporated the Fish! Philosophy into a PDS project with a big fish little fish service project. Ten Manual high school students, the "big fish," earned service hours each school day by assisting Val Ray, Manual's teacher for at-risk preschoolers, in caring for and teaching 21 "little fish" (children ages three to five). Some of

the service activities the high school students helped with were serving meals to the preschoolers, helping set tables, zipping coats, reading stories, playing games, and playing make believe. The Manual high school students also helped with the United Way Success by 6 program, which taught parents how to help their young children learn language and literacy skills.

Roosevelt Magnet School for the Performing Arts

During the 2007-2008 academic year, Roosevelt was in its ninth year as a Bradley PDS partner. The year also represented 75 years since the founding of the school, which was dedicated in 1932 as Roosevelt Junior High School. In December 2007, the school hosted a community celebration, which included dinner, performances by Roosevelt students, a memory wall, commemorative t-shirts, and sharing of old memories. Several from Bradley were in attendance at the event.

In 2004, Roosevelt was re-structured into an innovative fine arts academy to ensure that Peoria students had a school where they could develop their academic, artistic, and personal potential. In April 2008, Taunya Jenkins, Jeanne Youngren, Teresa Biddison, and Joella Shahan and others from Roosevelt attended a school board meeting to remind the Peoria Public School District 150 Board of Education about the importance of Roosevelt's mission to integrate the arts into all subject areas. Following a brief overview of



modality learning, examples of writing tools and prompts were shared, a rap song was performed, and Roosevelt students Megan Higgins and Anna Spencer sang an original song about succeeding on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). The presentation concluded with kudos from Roosevelt parent Barbara Boddie, who spoke about the school's concern for children, and five current and former students, who commented on what Roosevelt meant to them and how their education at Roosevelt had prepared them for success in high school.

Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center

During the 2007-2008 academic year, Valeska Hinton was in its twelfth year as a Bradley PDS partner. True to the school's energetic and innovative nature, a variety of PDS projects were in motion. In August 2007, the first-ever Bradley PDS graduate cohort was launched. The cohort consisted of ten Valeska Hinton teachers seeking master's degrees in curriculum and instruction through Bradley University. During the fall 2007 semester, Dr. Antola Crowe taught the cohort's introductory course, and during the spring 2008 semester Valeska Hinton's Ann Bond taught the cohort's research foundations course. Whether taught by Bradley faculty or Valeska Hinton faculty, one unique feature of the cohort was that all class sessions were held at Valeska Hinton.

In October 2007, Valeska Hinton hosted Health and Heritage Day, where families enjoyed learning about health topics and available health organizations. As part of the evening's special activities, Janet Jackson and six students from Bradley's Department of Nursing conducted blood pressure screenings for interested family members. In November 2007, free blood pressure screenings were provided by Bradley again when a Grandparents Day event was celebrated at the school. In November 2007, Valeska Hinton hosted their National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation visit, for which they had been preparing for many months. The visit went very well, and on January 31, 2008, the school received renewed NAEYC accreditation status. In particular, the NAEYC reviewers noted Valeska Hinton's outstanding curricula and family/community contributions.

Twice during the 2007-2008 academic year, Bradley pre-service teachers enrolled in my ETE 325: Methods of Teaching Reading K-8 courses benefited from the literacy expertise of Valeska Hinton teachers and administrators. During the fall 2007 semester, Beth Crider-Olcott, Peoria Public Schools' literacy specialist for the district's early childhood education programs, shared information about the Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment of oral reading fluency recently initiated by the Illinois State Board of Education. During spring 2008, pre-service teachers visited Ann Pettinger's first grade classroom to view a developmentally appropriate learning environment and observe the effective use of literacy materials, methods, and texts.



Throughout the year, the Fish! Philosophy continued to be a motivating factor for ongoing professional development and relationship building at Valeska Hinton. Another project that took off during the 2007-2008 academic year was based on a book teachers read the previous year. During 2006-2007, some Valeska Hinton teachers participated in a book study based on the book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder* by Richard Louv (2006), which warned that contemporary youth do not spend enough time outdoors and, therefore, do not understand or benefit from nature. During the 2007-2008 academic year, the book study group mobilized into an activist group called the Naturalists for the purpose of integrating the study of nature into the Valeska Hinton curricula. The group added a display case to the school's center court area to display and label items from nature, and engaged each grade level in helping to decorate a bulletin board with artistically-created representations of nature. In addition to promoting recycling at school, the Naturalists published a monthly newsletter titled *The Naturalist's Nook* that provided recycling ideas and nature activities for home and school.

Whittier Primary School

During the 2007-2008 academic year, Whittier was in its second year as a Bradley PDS site. Throughout the year, PDS projects at Whittier focused on writing, social studies, and science. One schoolwide project that had started the previous year and continued into 2007-2008 was the Bradley/Whittier journaling project. This schoolwide writing project between Bradley pre-service teachers in ETE 353: Methods of Teaching Language Arts K-8 and Whittier students involved the Whittier students writing journal entries and the Bradley pre-service teachers reading the entries and responding to them with one or two sentences. Dr. Arquette, who coordinated the project, explained, "By writing to a group of students each week, BU students not only learn about a great teaching strategy, they have a chance to see 'real' kids' writing, instead of textbook examples" (Fall Semester 2007, *Keeping Current with Kemper*, p. 6). During October 2007, Whittier first and third grade classes enjoyed presentations about living and learning in Cameroon when Dr. Arquette, who once served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Cameroon, brought slides, art, and clothing for the students to see and try on. The third grade students followed the presentation by reading folk tales from a number of African countries, writing their own folk tales, and hand-crafting African-style trading beads.



Dr. Heljä Antola Crowe, Dr. Patricia Nugent, Dr. Sherrie Pardieck, and Dr. Bob Wolffe attended the NAPDS Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida in April 2008.

During the spring 2008 semester, Whittier kindergarten and first grade students participated in hands on science activities designed and led by Bradley pre-service teachers enrolled in Michelle Edgcomb's SCI 101: Topics in Investigative Science for Educators classes at Bradley. The science activities included growing things, making living seed necklaces, making paint from plant juices and using it to paint pictures, making a chia pet, and touring the Bradley greenhouse. Also, during spring 2008, Whittier second grade students studied geography concepts, which included map vocabulary, locating and naming oceans, continents, and identifying key geographical features of Illinois and of the United

States. Throughout the unit, second graders wrote and illustrated geography books to record their newfound knowledge.

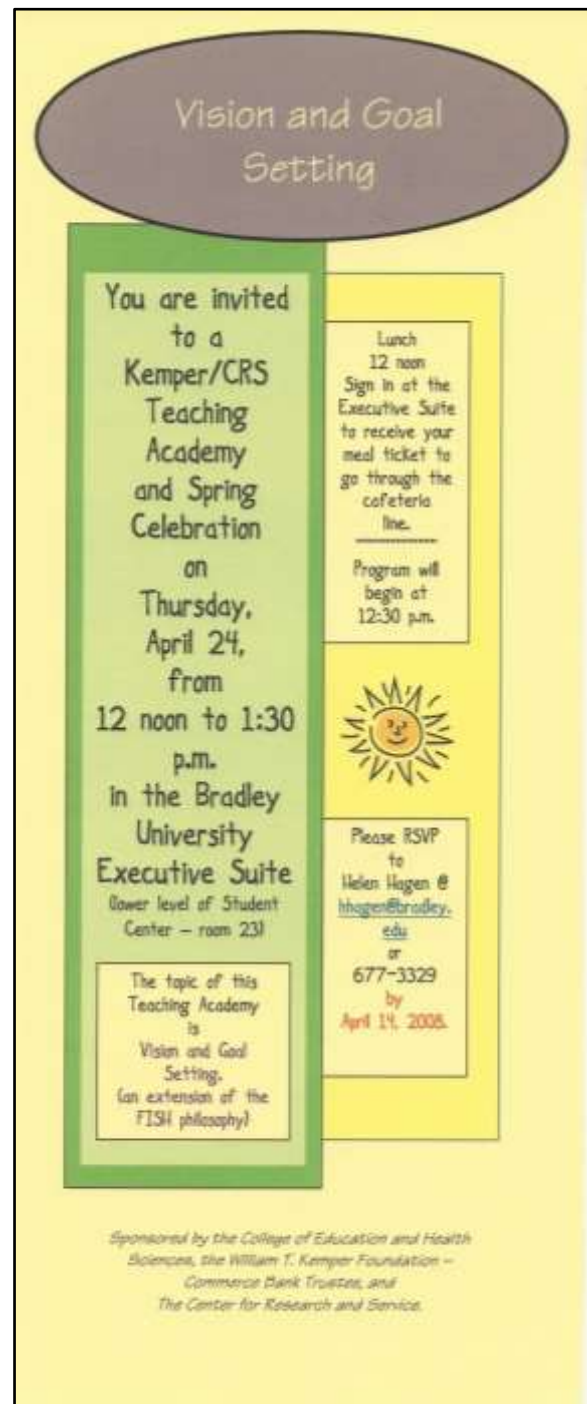
Major PDS Projects and Events

In April 2008, the annual National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) Conference was held in Orlando, Florida. In addition to the usual professional networking and sharing of PDS models, research, and accomplishments, the 2008 conference was notable because the NAPDS chose this particular gathering to announce and share its newly-drafted "What it Means to be a Professional Development School" position paper (National Association of Professional Development Schools [NAPDS], 2017), which included "Nine Essentials" of PDS work (National Association of Professional Development Schools [NAPDS], 2008). Four members of the Kemper Coordinator Council were in attendance at the 2008 NAPDS Conference to witness this seminal presentation firsthand.

During the NAPDS Conference, Dr. Antola Crowe and Dr. Wolffe presented a concurrent session titled "PDS Coordinator Role in Stimulating Synergistic Relationships," and Dr. Patricia Nugent, Ann Bond, Val Ray, and I presented "Fish! Partnership!" Both presentations were based on the collaborative efforts between Bradley and its four PDS sites.

Kemper Teaching Academy

Since Bradley's Kemper PDS Project began in 1996, the Kemper Teaching Academy was held at least twice each year to discuss important educational concepts and to thank Bradley's PDS partners. In this tradition, the fall Kemper Teaching Academy, themed "Leading through Teaching," was held on November 6, 2007. Forty-three people were in attendance at the event, where representatives from Bradley and Bradley's four PDS sites served on a discussion panel about learning and teacher leadership. The panel members were Jodi Walschaert from Valeska Hinton, Jamie Brown from Roosevelt, Nicole Barroga and Patricia Reidy from Whittier, Heather Young and Dawn Robison from Manual, Wendy Kookan, Rebecca Whimer, and Eric Hofmann from Bradley's Department of Nursing and Dawn Hall from Bradley's Department of Physical Therapy and Health Science.



During the spring 2008 semester, the Kemper Teaching Academy and Spring Celebration was co-hosted by the Kemper Coordinator Council and the College of Education and Health Sciences Center for Research and Service (CRS). The event, which was themed "Vision and Goal Setting," was held on April 24, 2008 in the Executive Suite of Bradley's Michel Student Center. Following opening comments by Dr. Peggy Flannigan, Dr. Joan L. Sattler, and me, our guests enjoyed lunch and presentations about the Bradley PDS projects and PDS research that had taken place during the 2007-2008



Bradley PDS panelists spoke on the topic of learning and teacher leadership at the Kemper Teaching Academy and Spring Celebration in April 2008.

academic year. At the conclusion of the event, the 35 people in attendance were asked to complete a research interest survey to assist with the planning of future Kemper Teaching Academies.

The Year in Summary

Many outstanding teaching, learning, and leadership opportunities were realized through the Kemper PDS Project during 2007-2008. Our annual Kemper PDS goals, the newly-released "Nine Essentials" of PDS work, successfully completing the NAEYC accreditation renewal process, and presenting at the NAPDS Conference were just a few PDS initiatives that were explored, incorporated, and celebrated during 2007-2008.

Members of the Kemper Coordinator Council provided professional development, participated in grant writing, coordinated PDS projects, and helped with school improvement and restructuring efforts at Bradley's PDS sites. Students from Bradley's PDS sites visited Bradley's campus, and Bradley students visited our PDS sites to participate in clinical experiences and other PDS activities. In fact, during the 2007-2008 academic year, 123 teacher candidates completed clinical field experiences at one of Bradley's four PDS sites.

As Bradley PDS faculty, staff, and students incorporated research, current topics and issues, professional development, service projects, hands on activities, and reflection into the PK-20 (pre-kindergarten through graduate school) curricula, our school-university collaborations were strengthened, students' learning needs were tended to, professional development was achieved, and our many PDS successes were celebrated.

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