

Chapter 2

Creating the Kemper Project: 1996-1997

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The first William T. Kemper Foundation grant was funded in October 1995. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Joan L. Sattler, dean of Bradley University's College of Education and Health Sciences, disseminated a College-wide call for applications for the newly-created position of William T. Kemper Fellow for Teaching Excellence. With excitement and eagerness, I applied for the position. In my letter of application, I wrote, "In my opinion, one of the first tasks that this Fellow must complete is a needs assessment of the college faculty. With this incredible opportunity, identification of interested faculty and actual needs and wants must be clearly assessed and prioritized" (L. Russell-Chapin, personal communication, November 1, 1995). On December 6, 1995, I was named the College's first Kemper Fellow. My duties officially began during the spring 1996 semester.

The First PDS Committee

According to the first Kemper grant proposal, our main focus was to develop services and a professional development school (PDS) model for high-risk children and families. Our second goal stated, "Through the Fellowship recipient's research, mentoring, and collaboration, the grant will benefit Bradley students and faculty members as well as many area students and professionals" (p. 3). Therefore, the beginning days and months of my Kemper Fellowship were spent creatively brainstorming possibilities and methods for building a comprehensive or integrated services model.

To assist in the management of our grant goals, a College-wide PDS Committee was formed in February 1996. A request for committee members was solicited through each of the College's five departments. Once convened, the committee included faculty and professional staff from the departments of teacher education, family and consumer sciences, nursing, and counseling. Dr. Rosalyn Templeton, Dr. Elda Buchanan, Dr. Mary Ann Manos, Dr. Therese Kiley, Betty

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~ Dr. Lori Russell-Chapin,
Kemper Fellow 1996-1997

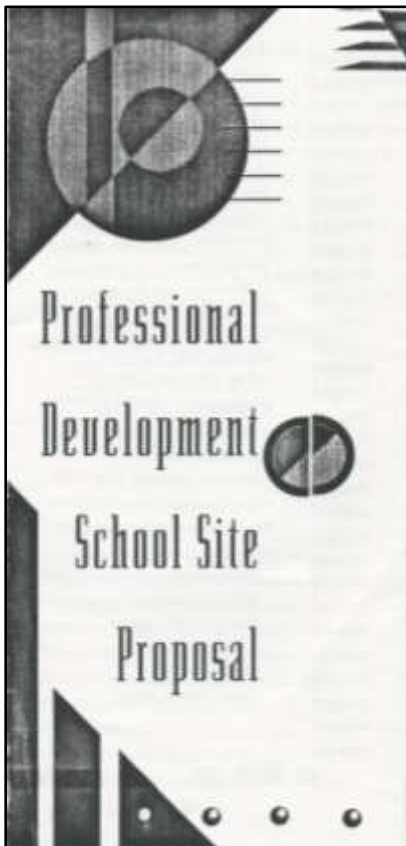
Church, Julie Baylor, Julie Feeny and Dr. Starr Hull were all pleased to serve. As Kemper Fellow, I chaired the committee. Together, we created policies and a strategic plan that included three goals to be accomplished over two years' time.

Bradley's First Three PDS Sites

Our first goal was to select at least three Bradley PDS sites. We began this effort by developing a proposal process for schools interested in partnering with Bradley as professional development schools. In November 1996, a burgundy and gray trifold brochure that included our proposal requirements was mailed to all public and private schools in the Peoria area. Commitments required of prospective Bradley PDS sites included respect for students and all people, understanding of diversity, willingness to learn new teaching techniques, willingness to work with outside professionals, receptivity to the change process, and commitment to the project for a period of three to five years (Professional Development School Site Proposal, p. 2). As PDS proposals began to arrive, Bradley's PDS



Committee developed selection criteria, which included a mission and vision statement, a commitment to use some school institute days for collaborative professional development, a plan for developing an on-site PDS team, a plan for schoolwide administration of the School-Level Environment Questionnaire (SLEQ), and examples of how the school would respond to each required PDS commitment (PDS Proposal Selection Criteria, October 23, 1996).



From the numerous proposals received, Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center in Peoria Public School District 150 was selected in November 1996 as the first Bradley PDS site. Shortly thereafter, in February 1997, Bradley's second and third PDS sites were named: C. B. Smith Primary School in Pekin Public School District 108, and Georgetowne Middle School in North Pekin-Marquette Heights School District 102.

As each Bradley PDS site was selected, College faculty were encouraged to apply for positions as Kemper school designees, later termed PDS site coordinators. In exchange for a reduction in teaching load, each Bradley PDS site coordinator was responsible for spending 45 to 60 hours per semester at the partner school engaging in activities such as on-site professional development, mentorship of beginning teachers, and collaboration in research, curriculum development, and grant writing (Professional Development School Site Proposal brochure, October, 1996). The site coordinators for Bradley's first three PDS sites were

Dr. Therese Kiley for Valeska Hinton, Dr. Celia Johnson for C. B. Smith, and Dr. Bob Wolffe for Georgetowne.

Mentoring Faculty

The PDS Committee's second goal was to mentor College and PDS partner faculty who had requested assistance with teaching and research. To accomplish this goal, surveys were distributed in November 1996 to College faculty as well as to teachers at Valeska Hinton. Based upon the survey responses, the PDS Committee identified several workshop topics and professional skills that might be useful, and identified faculty who desired classroom mentoring. As the Kemper Fellow, I worked with several College faculty to conduct classroom observations at both Bradley and at Valeska Hinton. We also provided two workshops at Valeska Hinton that fall: "A Thanksgiving Book Feast" in November 1996 and "Brain-integrated Teaching and Learning" in December 1996. From the lively discussions that occurred during these workshops, we identified several more learning needs for both Valeska Hinton and for College faculty.

Kemper Teaching Academy

The PDS Committee's final goal during 1996-1997 was the formation of a Kemper Teaching Academy. The first Kemper Teaching Academy was launched in February 1997 to provide opportunities for College faculty "to discuss and possibly demonstrate teaching strategies, concerns, individual strengths, and skills" (L. Russell-Chapin, personal communication, January 8, 1997). This was such a fun and enthusiastic group. Every month, faculty and staff from the College

PDS PROPOSAL SELECTION CRITERIA	
Applicant _____	Date Received _____
Reviewer: _____	Total Points _____
<p>1. A statement including a brief overview of where your school is today (mission statement) and where would you like to be in 5 years (vision statement)</p> <p>This component is worth 25 points total. Please allocate your points according to its match with our college's mission statement. Include at least a sentence of rationale supporting your allocation of points. Listed below are a few of the concepts which hopefully will be mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . interested services approach . applied knowledge . appropriate practices . life-long learning . student-centered . authentic assessment . experiential learning <p>Points: _____</p> <p>Rationale: _____</p>	
<p>2. A commitment to use some Institute Days for collaborative professional development</p> <p>This component is worth 15 points. We are looking for an acceptable minimum and a clearly defined amount of professional development days.</p> <p>Points: _____</p> <p>Rationale: _____</p>	
<p>3. A plan for developing an on-site PDS team including teachers, administrators, support staff, parents and community members</p> <p>This component is worth 30 points. Included below are essential elements needing to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . comprehensive team . stated timeline . systematic approach for inclusion . communication strategies . actual team membership <p>Points: _____</p> <p>Rationale: _____</p>	
<p>4. Submit a plan suggesting how the SLIQ might be administered in your school</p> <p>This component is worth 15 points. Look for the following ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . systematic explanation of administrative process . details . thoroughness <p>Points: _____</p> <p>Rationale: _____</p>	
<p>5. Include examples of how your school will respond to these four PDS criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * An attitude of respect for students and all people and an appreciation of diversity * A willingness to learn creative teaching approaches and a receptivity to the change process * An attitudinal and personnel commitment to this project for a period of 3-5 years * A willingness to adjust to the influx of outside professionals into your school and your staff coming to our college classes; understanding the benefits this collaborative effort could bring to your school and district <p>Each of the four bullets are worth 5 points. Score according to the thoroughness of the answer. Assign a final 5 points for overall quality of the proposal.</p> <p>Points: _____</p> <p>Rationale: _____</p> <p>Clarity Points: _____</p> <p>Further Comments or Questions from Reviewer: _____</p>	

would gather for lunch, listen to a helpful teaching presentation, and engage with ideas, questions, and answers. Topics during the spring 1997 semester ranged from formal presentations such as "The Difficulties in Grading: Courses and Field Experiences" to participants' collaborative sharing of journal articles about effective teaching strategies.

At the end of the year, College faculty who had attended six of the nine Kemper Teaching Academy luncheons received a \$300 stipend to purchase educational materials for their classrooms. However, the greatest incentive of these bi-monthly luncheons was the opportunity to collaboratively build a College-wide, diverse yet unified learning community focused on teaching excellence.



Dr. Lori Russell-Chapin and Michelle Didesch led an in-service at Valeska Hinton in August 1996.

During that first spring, the Kemper Teaching Academy sparked the beginnings of collaborative teaching, research partnerships, and other innovations that allowed professional identities to develop within the College and beyond for years to come.

The first year of the Kemper grant was exciting and filled with optimism. All who were involved knew what an incredible opportunity Bradley had been given to make a difference in the lives of high-risk families and children in the Peoria area. The PDS Committee accomplished its goals of selecting three Bradley PDS sites, mentoring College and PDS partner faculty, and launching the Kemper Teaching Academy. And we were just getting started!