SIM PD shares experiences in Qatar

SIM Professional Developer Brenda Lazarus returned to Florida recently after spending a couple of years in the small Persian Gulf country of Qatar. Her experiences there provide an interesting perspective on the culture and education system of the country.

Brenda says language barriers limited the amount of SIM instruction she was able to provide, but she was able to teach aspects of the model, which she calls "universal."

In the following correspondence with Janet Roth, Brenda shares some of the highlights of her stay in Qatar.

Why did you go?

I originally got the idea to go to Qatar on a Fulbright from a two-week consulting job that I had in Qatar in September 2002. The topic of the workshop was inclusion and the workshops were for teachers at two schools where they planned to integrate children with physical disabilities who had previously been attending a hospital school as the schools were old and not barrier free.

While I was there, I talked with U.S. Embassy people who had co-sponsored my visit with the Ministry of Education in Doha. They encouraged me to apply for a Fulbright to come back and work more extensively with the teachers.

What I did not know at the time was that Qatar was getting ready to launch a huge school reform effort under the encouragement of the Emir's wife, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser al Misnad.

She had already launched reform in higher education by starting Education City and bringing U.S. university branches to Doha. Currently, they have Virginia Commonwealth University (design program); Texas A&M (engineering); Cornell-Weil (medical); Carnegie Mellon (computers); and, this year, Georgetown University (political science) starts.

They had tried to use a magnet school model for K-12 some years back, but it was

SIM Professional Developers with a sense of adventure may be interested in a new opportunity Brenda Lazarus brought to our attention: Qatar's Supreme Education Council recently advertised for special education consultants for the country's new independent schools. For more information about this opportunity, visit the Chronicle of Higher Education web site,
http://chronicle.com/jobs/print.php?id=0000428620-01,
or visit the Supreme Education Council's web site,
http://www.english.education.gov.qa/ and click on "Job Listings."
Brenda would be happy to talk to any SIM PD interested in this job.

not making enough difference fast enough for Sheikha Moza, so she decided to bring in the Rand Corp. and completely reform the system by setting up independent (charter) schools, separate from the MOE [Ministry of Education]. Twelve schools started last year, and 20 more this academic year.

What did you do?

I was approved for a Fulbright for the 2003-2004 year and took a sabbatical from my home university to live in Doha for a year. I was assigned to the University of Qatar, instead of the MOE, for the reason that the MOE was in total disarray due to the school reform and the sponsors did not want to put me into a system that was being eliminated.

I taught classes (with a translator) and headed a committee to look at the existing graduate diploma program in special education and to make recommendations direct to the president of the university.

My committee made our report in January of 2004, and the president asked me to stay on another year to help get the program started. I accepted the challenge and took an unpaid leave from my home university and went back to Doha as a faculty member of the University of Qatar.

[The diploma program Brenda set up is three semesters. The first students are in their final field internship right now.]

What was the lifestyle like?

Qatar is quite modern as compared to Saudi Arabia in terms of the status of women. The dress and customs are still very conservative and Arabic/Islamic, but women can drive, can be presidents and heads of education institutions. The university is still segregated for undergraduate men and women, with a cement wall separating the campus and faculty having to cross at checkpoints to teach on one side or the other.

I read where the women were given the right to vote and run for office recently.

One of my colleagues in the education college ran for the council, which is the group that is governing in the waiting period for the constitution to be approved. She told me that three women ran and none were elected, but the Emir appointed one of the women to a vacancy that came about.

There will be elections sometime in the future, but the date was not yet set at the time I left. It had been a couple of years of the council making recommendations to the Emir and his cabinet; not like Iraq where all of this is happening at warp speed.

SNAPSHOT: International SIM

• In 1988, SIM PDs Ann Hoffmann and Conn Thomas launched SIM abroad with a two-week professional development session outside Sydney, Australia.

• The December 1999 issue of *Strategram* featured SIM PD Celeste Corey's work throughout Southeast Asia and Oceania teaching missionary families about SIM.

• The SIM Network in 2005 includes SIM PDs living and working in Canada, Guam, India, and Thailand.

I found the wife of the present Emir to be a very interesting and liberating person. Do you have any observations about her and what she is doing?

She is very pro-women and has done much to encourage young Qatari women to pursue higher education in England and now, in the U.S. Prior to the last few years, more Ph.D.s were obtained from Egypt (in Arabic) and a few from the U.K.

Some consider her behavior shocking as she has allowed her picture to be in the newspaper (there were no pictures of Qatari women in the paper 10 years ago). She lets a bit of hair show under her shaila (head scarf), and when in the U.S., has been shown in the paper and on TV in Western dress.

Q&A

SIM & post-secondary programs

Question

At UCA, where the Mashburn Institute is in a period of growth and metamorphosis, we have been talking about starting a clinic/program for incoming freshmen that struggle with learning using the SIM methodologies. Is there a screening instrument that KU uses that helps point students to certain strategies? I'm thinking that the students would be assigned based on need, but am not sure how to quickly assess that need. Any ideas? I am grateful for any help you send my way.

—Patty Kohler,
University of Central Arkansas

Answers

We used several assessments to screen for academically underprepared student-athletes at KU. I gave everyone the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (comprehension and vocabulary). We used the information as a general screening tool. I chose the SDRT because it was group administered, quick, and easily scored. The Gates-Mac-Ginitie and GRADE would work just as well if not better.

In addition, students completed an informal essay writing assessment. They were required to write a short essay on a selected topic. The essay was scored using criteria from the *Theme Writing* or *Paragraph Writing Strategy.*

I also administered an informal algebra test created by our math department. We looked at high school GPA in core courses, SAT/ACT scores, and information about attitude and academic focus provided by coaches who recruited the students to KU.

Finally, we administered some surveys designed to measure student academic motivation (LASSI) and sense of hope (Snyder's Hope Scale) for the future. Our goal was to quickly identify students who fit the profile of students who would require careful academic monitoring and skill interventions.

—Mike Hock, KU-CRL

Since 1979 at Misericordia, we have provided the Alternative Learners Project, our effort to serve students with disabilities. Since the mid-80s we have been introducing them to SIM stuff, including our home-grown strategies (FOCUS, PLANNER, etc.).

We have a well-organized admissions process (and clearing process of already enrolled students). All of our new students must enroll in a fall semester (twice a week), non-credit, seven-week seminar ("FYE 699 Learning Strategies") during which we orient them to the "setting demands" of college, the functions of ALP, tell them about and show them how to use their accommodations (e.g., extended time tests), and teach them a batch of Learning Strategies.

We introduce the strategies in a group setting (Describe and Model stages, and a little Controlled Practice), let students "cherry pick," and then follow up with one-on-one for the strategies they think they can use.

If anyone is interested in ALP, the admissions forms, etc., we use, feel free to access it (www.misericordia.edu).

If anyone wants a copy [of Joe's FYE 699 materials] (it's about 200 pages ... including a semester's worth of PLANNER sheets), tell me so at joerogan@adelphia.edu.

Paula Hamp Nelson honored during CLD conference

SIM Professional Developer Paula Hamp Nelson, who teaches both general and special education courses in Sioux City, Iowa, is one of five teachers nationwide recognized recently for outstanding teaching and commitment to students with learning disabilities.

Paula was honored during an awards luncheon Oct. 21 during the 27th International Conference on Learning Disabilities.

Through the award, the Council for Learning Disabilities encourages excellence in teaching and reinforces the concept of the master teacher.

Congratulations to Paula!

We teach our teacher ed students by example; we use several Learning Strategies in our courses. At KU this summer, for example, I rewrote my materials for Classroom Management a la the *Course Organizing Routine* and laced it with Content Enhancement Routines and a few Learning Strategies...and I am in the process of rewriting all of my other courses (the state wants all of our colleges/universities to revamp to meet a completely new set of standards by October).

We actually have a course in the undergrad program (Methods for MPH) in which we teach all of our future special edders to use SIM - they leave knowing how to use several strategies. I do that course in the spring; I'll freshen the course materials soon. If anyone wants a copy please let me know.

I like sharing my stuff with KU-disciples because I get great feedback. So, if I send you anything, please offer a critique.

—Joe Rogan,
College Misericordia, Pennsylvania

At Southwestern Michigan College, we teach the *Sentence Writing Strategy* in our developmental freshman composition course. Students place into that course on the basis of their Compass assessment--our entrance exam for all new students. The *SW Strategy* student lessons book *is* the textbook for that class. Every section of this course has a "shadow" instructor, a TA, if you will, whom I have trained to support the instructor (who is also trained.)

In order to pass this class, the students must master the strategy, but for outcomes assessment purposes, they must also pass an exit exam that enables them to register for the regular freshman comp course.

We're gathering the data now, but it appears that adopting the *SW Strategy* for the developmental English curriculum is responsible for increasing pass rates.

—Mickey Hay,
Southwestern Michigan College

SIMville
...where SIM Professional Developers meet, share, learn

If you haven't visited SIMville recently, we hope you'll take a few minutes soon to explore this cybervillage founded just for members of the SIM Professional Development Network.

SIMville contains a growing collection of useful materials for SIM Professional Developers.

Among the new and revised materials available on SIMville are an updated *StrateDirectory Information Form* and information about regional update meetings and the international conference.

We've also begun construction on a *Stratenotes* archives. This section will contain some of the more popular older articles from *Stratenotes,* as well as pdf copies of new *Stratenotes,* maybe even before they reach your mailbox!

Here is a partial list of materials available through SIMville:
- Articles, Brochures, and FAQs (downloadable pdf files to support your professional development efforts)
- A PowerPoint file of students' completed Possible Selves trees
- Content Enhancement devices in PowerPoint format
- Content Literacy Continuum information
- A Framework for Evaluating SIM Programs
- Graphics: Download copies of the "Reach for the Stars" graphics
- Research Summaries
- *Strategram* Archives and complete index
- Strateworks Renewal Form
- Video Clip Resources

New apprentices join SIM fold

Congratulations to the individuals who have participated in an inservice SIM Potential Professional Developers Institute this year. Below is a list of the institutes, the Professional Development Leaders (PDL), and the apprentices who attended, as reported to KU-CRL. Best wishes to these individuals as they work on the requirements to become certified SIM Professional Developers.

Learning Strategies/Content Enhancement, Iowa, 2004 and 2005

PDL: Ann Hoffman with the help of Shari Schindele

Apprentices: Wanda Barber, Teresa Bechen, Vickie Bone, Wendy Bouslog, Beth Bunt, Kimberly Conrad, Ann Dincer, Mary Donlea, Melissa Feller, John Froiland, Bev Given, Lori Helgevold, Kim Henderson, Alfonso Jaquez, Pam Jobgen, Peggy Keegan, Deb Krager, Kara Krohn, Carla Lee, Kim Lockwood, Vida S. Long, Lisa Magrane, Jeri Mead, Becky Montes, Holly Natvig, Sandra Olivas, Gina Paulsen, Theresa Presley, Serena Proffitt, Stephanie Robinson, Denise Roskamp, Mary Salazar, Irma Sierra, Dale Simonson, Mary Kay Sisler, Geri Smock, Judy Sweetman, Tricia Thoma, Debra Wolf, and Sara Youngers

Learning Strategies, North Carolina, January and June 2005

PDLs: Barbara Duchardt and Anne Clouatre

Apprentices: Nancy Harris, Debbie Higginbotham, Tracy Holmes, Geraldyne O'Kane, Wanda Prevatte, Michelle Richards, and Janet Rogers

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SIMTRAINER-L

Don't forget SIMTRAINER-L, the e-mail discussion list for SIM Professional Developers. If you are not a part of this list yet, e-mail **crl@ku.edu** and ask to be added.

Learning Strategies, El Paso, Texas, June 2005

PDL: Conn Thomas

Apprentices: Beth Bunt, Bev Given, Alfonso Jaquez, Becky Montes, Sandra Olivas, Serena Proffitt, Mary Salazar, and Irma Sierra

Learning Strategies/Content Enhancement, Kentucky, June 2005

PDL: Nancy Sander

Apprentices: Jullie Asher, Bridget Baker, Connie Brookins, Arlene Burnett, Lisa Colyer, Jason Creekmore, Joyce Groce, Sherry Harper, Mary Hibbard, Annie Homan, Connie Hunt, Jennifer Jones, Linda Lawson, Renee Leach, Jeanne Lee, Mendy Mills, Lisa Morrow, Kimberly Perry, Elizabeth Rose, Robin Rumsey, Shirley Simpson, Lisa Smith, Jason Strunk, and Beckie Wade

Learning Strategies, Missouri, June 2005

PDLs: Mary Ellen O'Hare and Kim Toebe

Apprentices: Diana Barthlow, Julie Herzog, Cate Koehne, Carol Svingen, Mary Swift, and Julie Visnovske

Learning Strategies, KU-CRL, June 2005

PDLs: Patty Graner and Barbara Ehren

Apprentices: Ann Colaizzi, Elsa Finnel, Mary Krueger, Emily Moore, Janie Naylor, Melissa Romos, Laurel Ruddy, Kathleen Shelor, Sandy Stevens, and Dana Winegardner

Content Enhancement, KU-CRL, June 2005

PDL: Connie Gentle

Apprentices: Rene Calhoon, Deborah Chapman, Craig Deal, William Dennis, Bradley Kaffar, Darren Minarik, and Jennifer Stringfellow

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Instructional Coaching

KU-CRL has scheduled several more Instructional Coaching Institutes for 2006. The next institute will be January 12-14, 2006, in Lawrence, Kan. Note the registration deadline for this institute of December 12, 2005. The last coaching institute filled early, so get your registration in the mail!

Scheduled Instructional Coaching Institutes
University of Kansas Lawrence, Kan.

January 12-14, 2006
(Registration deadline is December 12, 2005)

August 3-5, 2006
(Registration deadline is June 30, 2006)

October 12-14, 2006
(Registration deadline is September 11, 2006)

Registration forms and additional information are available on the web site, www.instructionalcoach.org.

More information

Contact: Mona Katz
crl@ku.edu
785.864.0626

Our instructional coaching web site includes much more information about the theory of and research on instructional coaching and links to related articles. www.instructionalcoach.org

StrateDirectory Announcement

If you were not listed in *StrateDirectory* last year or if you need to correct or change directory information, complete a new *StrateDirectory Information Form* and return it to KU-CRL by November 15 to be included in the 2006 *StrateDirectory*. If you were listed in last year's directory and you do not need to change any information, you do not need to complete this form. Forms are available in SIMville on the KU-CRL web site.