



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Educate Us: Egypt **Name:** Moira Slattery
Other Team Members: Alanna Mertens
Program: Chicago Program
Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 **Location Visited:** Egypt
Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 02

Project Summary: What started as a dream to build a unit of study integrating the math, science and engineering with the history and religions of Egypt became an adventure of a lifetime. In two short weeks we traveled over 15,000 miles across the world and ventured back in time nearly 5000 years. In our quest to bring the wonders of Egypt to our middle school students, we started in Cairo to experience the big city life of modern Egyptians. We were struck by the noise and congestion of this bustling city bordered by the Pyramids of Giza and the River Nile. We walked the streets and learned to navigate traffic with courage (there are no traffic signals). We were offered help and guidance at every corner by the kind and jovial people of Cairo. They were always ready to help the two Americans find their way, often with a joke or easy smile. We walked through street markets and malls and found out that you can buy anything you need from carpets to cell phones. We discovered the Al-Azhar Mosque and reveled at its peaceful square and tall minarets. We were astounded by the huge collection of artifacts at the nearby Egyptian Museum. We were awed by the faces of the royal mummies who really did achieve a level of immortality as we read about their lives in the year 2009. At the King Tut exhibit we saw treasures untold for this relatively minor king and could only imagine what would have been found in the tomb of King Ramses II if it had not been plundered.

After two days on our own we met with our guide Mohammed, who is an Egyptologist and resident Cairenian. Over the next 10 days we traversed over 1500 miles. We visited all of the pharonic sites from Cairo to Aswan/Abu-Simbel to Luxor. We floated down the Nile and saw how the desert and fertile land coexist. We visited with the Egyptian people and learned about similarities and differences. We included a trip to Alexandria to explore the city that hosted not only great rulers like Alexander the Great, Anthony, Cleopatra and Ptolemy, but also enlightened mathematicians like Euclid. We explored the Egyptian, Greek and Roman artifacts that scatter this diverse port city.

We brought Egypt to our students in real time through our Internet blog: <http://npsegyp.blogspot.com/> . Each night after a full day of exploration and discovery we posted pictures, videos and travelogues. We invited the community to ask questions and discover Egypt right along with us.

Career Impact: We were lucky enough to have an opportunity to go to a place most people only dream of, but of course going to a developing country, in the middle of the Sahara Desert, in the summer had its own special challenges. We met our biggest fear on our first day. We decided to explore Cairo on our own and that meant navigating not only the crowded, busy streets but also the culture. Since Egypt is predominantly Muslim, we often felt under dressed. Everyone in Egypt is covered from head to toe in the 110 degree heat. We learned to keep arms and legs covered and to carry a head scarf at all times. While we were pleasantly surprised to find English widely spoken, we were put off by the constant barrage of people trying to sell us trinkets, take us in taxis, take our pictures, bring us to the national jewelry market, or walk us across the street... for some bakeesh (a tip), of course! We soon learned to say a polite "no", to walk with a purpose and to carry on with a smile, joke or laugh. Personal growth came daily as we learned to feel comfortable around the Egyptian people. We made friends, we shared stories, we laughed together.

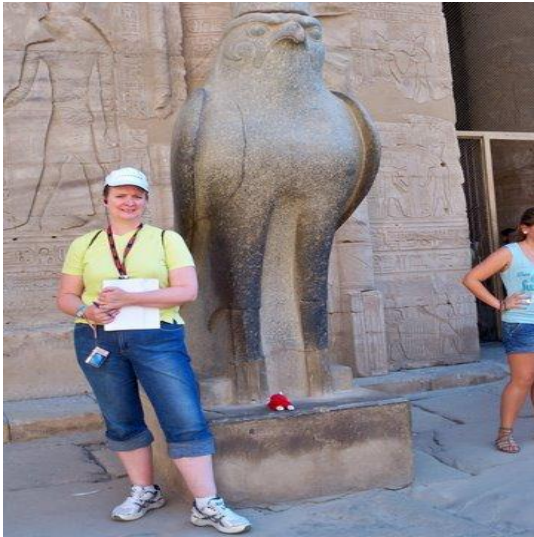
Classroom/Community Impact:As a result of this fellowship we have become inspired to be better teachers! We have created a sense of awe, curiosity, and wonder among students, staff, and parents. Students continue to ask us questions about our Egyptian adventure. Community members have shared their similar desires to travel to Egypt and their eagerness to read the blog. We serve as positive role models by sharing with our students our experience as we tried new foods, entered mosques, explored temples reverently, and conversed with locals. Students loved watching their teacher take a camel ride through the Saharan desert and guess which brand of pop was written in Arabic. We seek to inspire the community to learn more about other countries and other cultures by sharing our website with not only our students but with the community at large. We have even been asked to share our blog with a school in Boston. We found a cohort of teachers in Egypt who share our excitement and who are using our ideas to enrich their curriculum. We made a lasting connection with Mohammed, our guide, who has agreed to continue to serve as a classroom resource through e-mail discussions.

Open Response: As school begins, "Educate US: Egypt" will be developing and changing. We are creating a lasting website for all of our pictures, journals and videos. We are developing a multi-media unit where we expect students to use our website to do inquiry searches around a variety of topics spanning from history and religion to Euclidean geometry and engineering. We have a collection of

postcards, artifacts, papyrus, informational texts, picture books and fictional stories to be a resource for our staff in the Educate Us: Egypt suitcase. We have created a set of four annotated picture books. Currently students are using these resources to create stories about two teachers who travel to Egypt. Using our authentic stories as a jumping off point is helping our middle school students to write expository and narrative pieces. We will create a class anthology and present it to the school community. Additionally, students are reading fictional stories set in Egypt. Through the Educate Us: Egypt unit and The Fund for Teachers grant opportunity, we have inspired so many others to explore the world.

Quote: We returned from Egypt and unpacked not only our bags, but a treasure trove of information to share with our entire school community and beyond.

Photos:



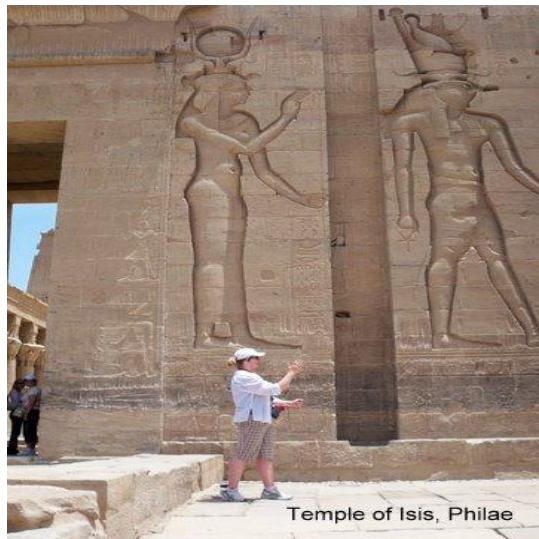
Alanna meets the falcon guarding the Temple of Horus.



We visit the Aswan High Dam and Lake Nasser - an engineering wonder.

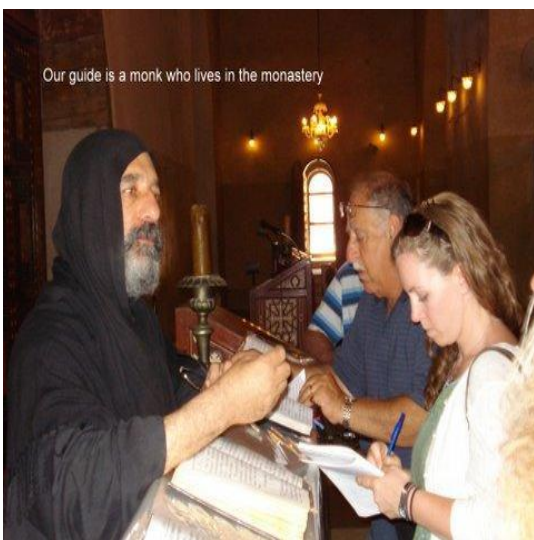


Valley of the Kings



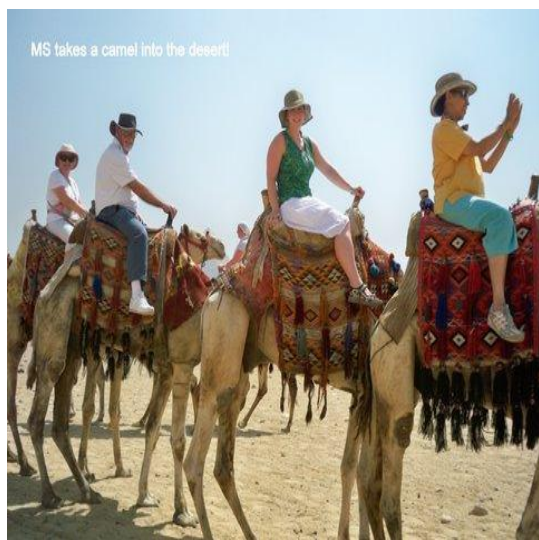
Temple of Isis, Philae

Who is Isis here?



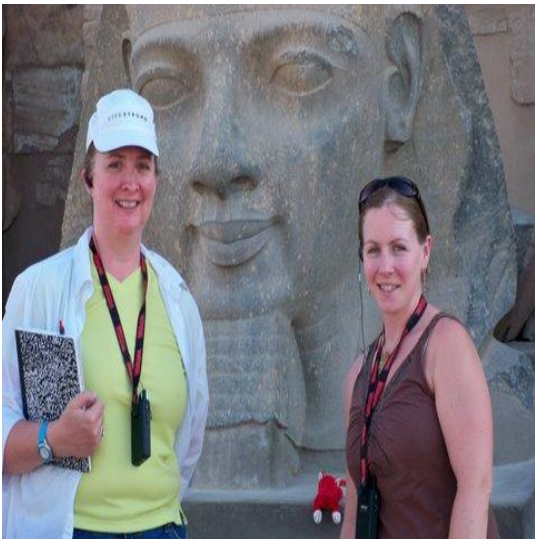
Our guide is a monk who lives in the monastery

Moira takes notes on Coptic Christianity.

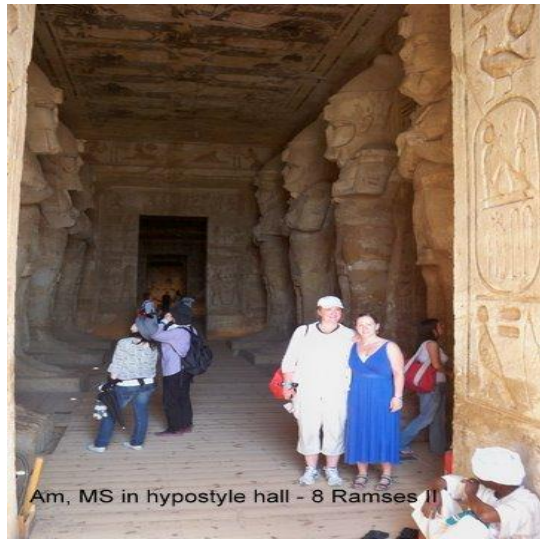


MS takes a camel into the desert!

Moira rides camel Omar through the Sahara Desert!



We meet Ramses II up close.



Am, MS in hypostyle hall - 8 Ramses II

We visit the Hypostyle hall in Abu-Simbel - Temple of Ramses II.