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Researcher finds her niche at NKU

Egyptian aims to improve schools in her country at kindergarten level

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

HIGHLAND HEIGHTS -

After trying out a few different schools, Egyptian educator Heba Ali has found a research home at Northern Kentucky University.

"I came first to Minnesota State University and Morehead (State University) but I found that there they (didn't have) all my needs for completing my research so I looked about for another university and my adviser there helped me on that. He suggested other universities and Northern Kentucky (was) one of them."

Ali is conducting postdoctoral research on the U.S. experience with Montessori, Head Start, and Reggio Emilia teaching techniques for kindergartners. She holds a position at the University of Cairo.

"My goal is to identify the relationship between high-quality systems and educational approaches in kindergarten programs - what is the most suitable approach to investigate and the state's standards for kindergarten children," said Ali.

"We in Egypt are applying higher standards to young children and trying to apply higher quality in our schools - especially kindergarten. When I go back to Egypt all the results will be useful for the system of teaching kindergarten."

Elaine Jarcow, NKU's dean of education, encouraged Ali to finish her work at NKU.

"When I told her about my needs she said 'We can meet all your needs and you are very welcome to complete your research here,' " said Ali. "Moreover, they have professors familiar with my approach and they are trying to help me a lot. All the university and the department of education especially (is) very helpful for me in many things."

Jarcow is chairwoman of the NKU Internationalization Task Force where she said she has "worked diligently to allow the university to benefit from my area of emphasis and the multicultural experiences of others."

"The internationalization of NKU is very important to me," said Jarcow. "Dr. Heba's visit is important to NKU and to her university. The contact between the cultures educates both groups and allows us each to share the best of our cultures. This visit furthers NKU and the College of Education and Human Services' commitment to the core value of multiculturalism."

Ali will be conducting her research through June.

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