
NEWS *from* BONNIE

Volume 17, Issue 1

April 2011

New Year, New Assignment

As I mentioned in my last newsletter, as of January, I started a new assignment as a Distance Learning Instructional Design Consultant. So far, it's been going well. =)

In general, my work seems to be breaking down into two types of consulting: helping to put existing courses online and helping people to think through issues involved in creating new courses and training programs. In each of these areas of consulting, my involvement ranges from offering advice to actually creating a product, whether that is a module of an online course, or a document which pulls together suggested learning objectives into one place so that people can react to it.

Instructional design is turning out to be a better fit for me than I imagined. It really is a form of educational planning & logistics, and planning & logistics are things I am good at. However, it *has* been a bit of a shock to go from being the only one involved in the process (as I was when I designed, created and then taught my own courses) to being part of larger teams. In the consulting role, I feel like I do a fair amount of waiting—for people to respond to my questions, for people to send me materials to put online, etc.

While there is a lot of planning in my new job (which I like), the irony is that the consulting / waiting aspect means that it's a bit more challenging to plan my own life and work flow. I would appreciate your prayers for wisdom. I am trying to be a good steward of the in-between times while resisting the urge to add more major projects which could become overwhelming in the future.

State of the Union—10 months after move

The first 2 1/2 months of 2011 were very busy. I spent a lot of time preparing for my trip to Kenya, on the professional front (creating materials) and also on more practical fronts. (About 2 weeks before my trip, it suddenly hit me that I should really check and make sure I had enough warm weather professional clothes to wear! Cool season in Nairobi was still warmer than most of the summer in BC...)

In addition, January through March is when I have been doing some extra teaching on the side for Seattle Pacific University. Thanks to my move, this year I got to do that teaching face-to-face and not online, which solved some logistic issues and created some new ones.

I am very thankful that my energy levels were back up before this crazy busy season hit, and in general these days, I am feeling pretty good. Now that my overall workload is back down, I am refocusing on taking better care of myself. I have a plan to add consistent exercise back in (it got squeezed out sometime in November) and being more proactive on the social front. My New Year's resolution was to do one fun thing a week and to have one weekend getaway to relax a quarter. So far, I have managed the weekly goal (though some of my "fun" things may have been a bit of a stretch....) and I have my first weekend away planned for mid-April.

Consulting in Kenya

In early February, I spent 8 days working with a variety of people involved in the Institute for Development of Language and Translation in Africa (i-DELTA). i-DELTA offers courses in English in East Africa and in French in West & Central Africa. Their current students are all Africans, most of whom are already involved in language & translation projects. i-DELTA is a bit unique in our training ecology in that its courses are accredited through a South African university which primarily offers online courses.

My first 3 days in Nairobi were spent in meetings with i-DELTA instructors, staff and other Africa Area leaders. During these meetings, I moderated several hours of discussions on questions I thought a wider audience needed to tackle, such as the desired learning outcomes for graduates of this training program and picking a grading philosophy (instructors come from American, British, French, Kenyan, and South African educational systems...which differ enormously).



Over the next 5 days (the end of one week and the first half of the next), I led a workshop for a smaller group of people who are actively involved in creating courses and adapting courses for online delivery. We spent a lot of time talking through issues specific to this training program and its context. It can be quite challenging to think through how to offer a course designed around small group discussion online when many of your prospective students may not have good internet access.

It was a lot of work ahead of time thinking about what would be the most helpful questions and material to cover for this particular group of people and then creating the workshop materials, but I was happy with how things went. The participant evaluations were very positive and encouraging. Thank you so much for praying for this time!

Over the next six months or so, I will be building two online courses to be used in Africa, and hopefully eventually elsewhere: one on Sociolinguistics and one on Translation. I am excited about staying connected and contributing to the work in Africa and about increasing my own skills in building online courses and familiarity with the specific learning management system we're using.

Thank you for partnering with me,

Bonnie Hanson

Picture above & below:
Workshop participants and me



Rejoice with me that:

- * My energy levels have been better.
- * My trip to Kenya went well and the participants reported that they found the meetings & workshop helpful.
- * I survived the crazy busy season of January-March!
- * My support has been at 100% since I moved back to Seattle. That is a huge blessing, but there is not a lot of financial cushion built into my support quota. Please pray for ongoing provision and pray against financial crises.

Please uphold these concerns in prayer:

- * Please continue to pray for wisdom as I try to set up healthy work-life rhythms
- * I am still feeling a bit less connected than I would like to, particularly at church. I realize that this is a fairly normal way to feel in the first year after a move, but I would covet your prayers on this front.
- * I am grateful that I am up-to-date on medical things, but I am behind in getting to the dentist. Pray that I will get to this soon, and that the needed work will not be horribly expensive.

Contact Information:

bonnie_henson@sil.org

Wycliffe 

Partners in Bible Translation

PO Box 628200
Orlando, FL 32862-8200

1-800-WYCLIFFE www.wycliffe.org

For financial gifts, please attach a note saying "for the ministry of Bonnie Henson"