



# NEWSLETTER

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## A Message from the ABA President The Challenges of Success

By Jay Moore, PhD



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It seems like a mere 28 years ago (gasp!) that I received my PhD. As I was finishing my degree program, I was not surprisingly anxious about my prospects of finding a job, and I not surprisingly talked with my adviser a great deal about how to become gainfully employed. I learned that a new professional society had been formed

and it looked like it was going to thrive. By joining, I might increase the prospects of landing a job. I also might be in a better position to contribute to the discipline. So, I joined and began to attend the annual conventions. That society is now known as ABA International, and thrive it has. Happily, I now find I am also able to contribute to its governance in ways I hadn't anticipated back then.

From its beginnings in the mid-1970s, ABA has grown to over 4,000 members. Approximately 3,000 individuals register for our annual convention. The annual convention includes roughly 2,000 events, with approximately 708 posters, 236 panels and symposia, 229 papers, 21 invited addresses, 75 workshops, and a wide variety of meetings, reunions, exhibits, and special events. We operate in the black, and we have our own sparkling building in Kalamazoo. Few other professional societies can claim this degree of success in this time span. Clearly, then, ABA is thriving, just as anticipated 28 years ago.

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## ABA Delegation Works Toward the Establishment of Behavior Analysis in the Middle East

By Maria E. Malott, PhD, Nour Al-Qassab, MA, Linda Hayes, PhD, M. Jackson Marr, PhD, Kent Johnson, PhD, Phyllis Williamson, PhD, and Steve Richardson, BS

### Overview

From October 15<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup>, an ABA delegation traveled to the Middle East to promote the long-term establishment of behavior analysis in the region. Members of the delegation traveled to Manama, Bahrain; Dhahran, Saudi Arabia; and Doha, Qatar. The delegation's major activities took place in Bahrain's capital and largest city, Manama. Bahrain, officially the Kingdom of Bahrain (Mamlakah al-Bahrain in Arabic), is an independent country made up of 33 islands in the western Persian Gulf. Dhahran is the headquarters of Saudi Aramco, the largest oil company in the world. Doha, the capital and largest city of Qatar, is a major Persian Gulf port. Figure 1 shows the sites of the Middle East delegation.



Figure 1. Map of delegation sites: Dhahran, Saudi Arabia; Doha, Qatar; and Manama, Bahrain.

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Very little is known about behavior analysis in the countries of the Middle East, and there is a tremendous need for services and opportunity for growth.

The 2003 Middle East delegation was organized by Nour Al-Qassab and Maria Malott, with the administrative support of Tami McDowell and other ABA staff. Nour Al-Qassab has taken a leading role in the expansion of behavior analysis in the Gulf Region. Al-Qassab has a 14-year old child with developmental disabilities, and he encountered behavior analysis while researching services and treatment options. Al-Qassab is a senior geologist at Saudi Aramco, and earned a masters degree in Special Education from the University of Michigan, Dearborn after his child's diagnosis. He received a 2001 International Development Grant from the Society for the Advancement of Behavior Analysis to disseminate behavior analysis in the region; facilitated the creation of the Gulf Region Applied Behavior Analysis chapter in 2002; and, since then, has worked tirelessly in the planning and execution of the 2003 delegation visit. He founded a company called NAMA Consultancy, with the mission of the dissemination of behavior analysis in the Middle East. NAMA sponsored the 2003 ABA delegation and will continue coordinating future dissemination efforts. Figure 2 is a photograph of Nour Al-Qassab.



**Figure 2. Nour Al-Qassab.** In addition to Al-Qassab, delegates included M. Jackson (Jack) Marr from Georgia Tech; Kent Johnson from Morningside Academy; Linda Hayes from the University of Nevada, Reno; Maria Malott from the Association for Behavior Analysis; and Joseph Morrow, Phyllis Williamson, and Steven Richardson from Applied Behavior Consultants. Morrow was unable to travel with the delegation; however, he contributed with an address on the behavioral treatment of autism and developmental disabilities. Figure 3 shows the ABA delegates at the Middle East Applied Behaviour Analysis Conference.



**Figure 3. ABA delegates.** From left to right: Dr. Kent Johnson, Dr. Linda Hayes, Dr. Jack Marr, Nour Al-Qassab, Dr. Phyllis Williamson, Steven Richardson, and Dr. Maria Malott.

### Activities

The delegation's main activities were to disseminate the science and practice of behavior analysis and explore opportunities for growth in the region. The activities included providing an overview of behavior analysis, conducting specialized seminars, and networking.

### Overview of Behavior Analysis

The central activity of the delegation was the Middle East Applied Behaviour Analysis Conference, which was attended by approximately 100 doctors, teachers, professionals, and parents from Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates. The conference was opened by Shaika Hind Bint Salman Al Khalifa, a member of the Bahraini Royal family representing the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry. The delegates provided a comprehensive introduction to behavior analysis, including a general overview presented by Marr; a history of the treatment of autism with behavior analysis by Williamson; an outline of behavior analysis applications for the education of children and youth by Johnson; an introduction to organizational behavior management and systems analysis by Malott; and a description of training opportunities in behavior analysis in higher education by Hayes. Figures 4 and 5 were taken of the conference audience.



Figure 4. Audience left.



Figure 5. Audience right.

#### Specialized Seminars

Williamson and Richardson conducted two-day introductory and advanced seminars in autism. The introductory seminar, *Autism and Behavior Analysis* focused on the assessment of behavior excesses and deficits, development and implementation of a curriculum based on assessment, and evaluation and improvement based on implementation data. The *Advanced Autism Seminar* focused on the practice of sequential, discrete trial lessons across several basic skill deficits typically exhibited by children with autism, development of communication repertoires, and generalization of learned skills.

Johnson conducted a two-day seminar about applications of behavior analysis to regular school education, and education for children and youth with mild learning disabilities and ADHD. He demonstrated applications of instructional technologies such as Direct Instruction, Precision Teaching, peer coaching, delayed prompting, as well as behavior management techniques and methods. Participants also practiced behavioral methods. The workshops also showed how these

technologies can be incorporated into existing and new schools and after-school programs. Following Johnson's workshop, Marr presented a paper on applications of behavior analysis to instruction in science at the university level. Afterwards, Marr conferred with Dr. Farid Elyahky of the Higher Colleges of Technology in Abu Dhabi regarding the possibility of a conference devoted to engineering education sometime in the near future.

#### Networking

Delegates experienced a tremendous demand for services wherever they traveled, especially in developmental disabilities and education. Following are some of the networking highlights.

##### *Autism and Developmental Disabilities*

Hayes, Al-Qassab, and Malott visited the Shafallah Center for Children with Special Needs and the Al-Noor Institute, both advanced centers in the treatment of children with disabilities in Doha, Qatar. They explored ways to bring behavior analysis technology and training to those centers. The Shafallah Center is a private, non-profit institution that provides special education, therapeutic, and health care support services for children. The Center has been experiencing accelerated growth, and will move next year to a state-of-the-art facility able to provide services for 1,000 children.

Figure 6 shows Hakam Abu Al-Kheir, Department Head of Psychological Services and Behavior Analysis at the Shafallah Center, who was trained by Dr. Donald Baer and is currently a doctoral student at the University of Kansas. Figure 7 shows Dr. Eddie M. Demming, General Manager of the Shafallah Center, who welcomed the visitors and offered the institution's collaboration and support for long-term development of behavior analysis in Qatar.



Fig. 6. Hakam Abu Al-Kheir. Fig. 7. Dr. Eddie Demming.

Al-Qassab, Hayes, and Malott also visited the Al-Noor Institute, which specializes in the education of blind children and is becoming the most advanced and well-recognized center for the blind in the Gulf Region. Although the center emphasizes treatment for the blind, its children typically present multiple developmental disabilities. Abeer F. Jaffal, Headmistress and Special Education Counselor, expressed a significant need for

effective treatment of developmental disabilities to better serve the institute's population. She welcomed the delegates and explored means to offer behavior analysis training for her staff. Jaffal, shown in Figure 8, was enthusiastic about the possibility of having the Institute become a center of application of behavior analysis in the region.

Laila Alkadhem, Al-Qassab, Malott, and Marr visited the Psychiatric Division of Dhahran's Health Center in Saudi Aramco. Saudi Aramco has been active for more than 70 years and controls a quarter of global oil reserves. In 2000, Saudi Aramco employed more than 56,000 people and it offers a broad range of benefits including housing opportunities, educational assistance, and free medical care for its 300,000 employees and family members. Alkadhem, Clinical Psychologist of the Psychiatric Division, offered tremendous support for the delegation, facilitating contacts within Saudi Aramco, processing visas, and serving as an interpreter for many events. Figure 9 shows Alkadhem.



Figure 8. Abeer Jaffal.



Figure 9. Laila Alkadhem.

The delegates met with Dr. Hany Alshafey, Chief of the Psychiatric Division of the Dhahran Health Centre in Saudi Aramco, William Ewing, Supervisor of the Community Counseling Clinic within the Psychiatric Division and Dr. Sayed Elsayed, Child Psychiatrist, shown in Figure 10.



Figure 10. From left to right: Dr. Sayed Elsayed, Dr. Hany Alshafey, and William Ewing.

The objective of the visit was to further the Psychiatric Division's initial exposure to behavior analysis, which began in 2002 through the efforts of Al-Qassab, who at that time arranged a seminar in autism presented by Dr. James Partington. The Community Counseling Clinic addresses the treatment of autism and developmental disabilities and the need for effective technology is eminent. The delegates talked about the field of behavior analysis's progress and developments in the US, including information about certification, growth, and practitioner demand.

#### School Education

Johnson engaged in multiple networking activities related to education, including an introductory presentation on behavior analysis to teachers at the British School of Bahrain. He also met with Dr. Siham Al-Suwaig, a private consultant from Bahrain who has formed a partnership with McGill University in Quebec, Canada to open the Royal University for Women in Bahrain. His Majesty, Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, donated the land to build the University; a temporary site is scheduled to open in the fall of 2004. Dr. Al-Suwaigh expressed interest in incorporating the teaching and application of behavioral technology in the University's curricula and discussed the possibilities of sponsoring the training of faculty at Morningside Academy in Seattle, Washington, who would then return to teach behavior analysis in education at the Royal University for Women.

Johnson's seminar generated other possible opportunities to bring behavioral technology to education in the Persian Gulf, including inquiries from Sue O. Hale, Director of the Learning Center of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development in Doha, Qatar, and Elizabeth H. Naert, Principal of the Learning Center. Figure 11 shows Hale and Naert.



Figure 11. From left to right: Sue Hale and Elizabeth Naert from the Learning Center in Qatar.

Mrs. Hayat Hammoud, Deputy Director of Al Nahda National Schools in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, has requested a two-week workshop for their teachers this coming winter, and is would like to develop a long-term cooperation plan with Morningside Academy.

*Higher Education*

Hayes, Al-Qassab, and Malott, sponsored by NAMA, traveled to Doha, Qatar, to explore the potential for developing a masters program in behavior analysis through a partnership of the University of Nevada, Reno and the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. The delegates met with Dr. Saif Ali Al-Harari, Vice Chairman of the Qatar Foundation, which is a non-profit private foundation established in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar. Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned, consort of the Emir of the State of Qatar serves as the chairperson of the Qatar Foundation of Education. A picture of the Foundation is shown in Figure 12. It seeks to support Qatari society through the establishment of scientific and educational institutions and has partnered with Cornell University to establish the Weill Cornell Medical College and with Virginia Commonwealth University to create the VCU School of the Arts in Qatar. The Foundation has also signed a ten-year agreement with Texas A & M University to establish a school of engineering and has created the RAND-Qatar Policy Institute in Doha in collaboration with the RAND Corporation, among other partnerships.

In addition to these activities, Johnson and Marr were invited to the Psychology Department at Bahrain University where they met with the Chair, Dr. Tawfik Abdul Moniem, and several colleagues primarily to discuss establishing laboratories for training and research. They were at the very early planning stages and discussed some stages in the development of laboratory facilities. They toured the university, including classrooms, computer facilities, and the university library. Johnson and Marr agreed to maintain contact and to provide relevant information on development of laboratories and other resources.



**Figure 12. The Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.**

In order to assemble a solid program for behavior analysis in the Middle East, a critical mass of well trained behavior analysts needs to be established. To this end, Hayes, with the help of other delegates and their organizations, drafted a preliminary package to offer a masters program in behavior analysis. The proposal

currently being developed by the University of Nevada, Reno, could provide faculty from multiple programs in the United States to teach a three-year MA program in Qatar. The program would require an enrollment of 36 students who could have the choice of three specializations: Developmental disabilities, education, or organizational behavior management. Hayes is planning to seek funding for such an endeavor.

**Next Steps**

The delegation was successful in the dissemination of behavior analysis. The delegates had ample opportunity to present a comprehensive view of the field and to discuss applications, especially in the areas of developmental disabilities and education. The delegation led to the growth of Gulf Region ABA into Middle East ABA, an expansion approved by the ABA Executive Council. The scope of the chapter is now much larger, encompassing eight more countries and allowing potential for greater dissemination.

Opportunities for further development are being explored and some of these could have significant impact, in particular, the University of Nevada, Reno's proposal for a masters program in behavior analysis. Other efforts are being explored by the Morningside Academy and Applied Behavior Consultants, as well other institutions. By current demand, ABA will conduct a follow-up delegation in 2004. Requests have already come from Qatar and Abu Dhabi and Dubai, both Emirates within the United Arab Emirates.

Figure 13 shows Dr. Hussain Ali Maseeh, who traveled from Dubai to explore a follow-up delegation in 2004. Next to him is Mr. Ahmad Sultan, a business man who assisted with 2003 delegation logistics.



**Fig. 13. From left to right: Dr. Hussain Ali Maseeh and Ahmad Sultan.**

Much work is still necessary to continue disseminating behavior analysis internationally. ABA will need the help of many committed behavior analysts and institutions to provide support for long-term development. The article on page 7, "Dissemination of Behavior Analysis: The Role of International Delegations," provides information about how ABA members and organizations can participate.