

Korea Trip Puts Professor Back In Elementary Classroom Again

Don Pottorff, a professor of reading and language arts at GVSU, returned to the Orient to return to his roots in education.

Pottorff took a sabbatical leave from GVSU for the 1999-2000 academic year to teach elementary school children in Teajong, Korea, located about 90 minutes south of Seoul. Pottorff taught classes at Teajong Christian International School, a K-12 school with 18 different nationalities represented among faculty and students. He taught English as a second language at the school, and also coordinated a special education program and worked with middle and high school teachers on curriculum improvement.

"I wanted to get back into the classroom and teach children for a year in an international school," Pottorff said.

Pottorff, who had previously spent 10 years in Asia teaching for the U.S. Dept. of Defense in four different countries, was joined on the trip by his son, Steven.



Don Pottorff spends time with elementary students in Teajong, Korea.

Faite Mack Delivers Lectures in Thailand

As the result of a trip to Australia one year earlier, School of Education professor Faite Mack traveled to Thailand to lecture educators and help provide scholarships to high potential students from impoverished backgrounds.

Mack was invited to conduct several workshops at Srinakharinwirot University in Bangkok for 250 leaders of the country's special education efforts. Mack spoke to the educational leaders on several topics during his six-week stay, delivering his lectures in English with translators conveying the message to non-English speaking participants. Mack also conducted additional educational business and participated in a workshop in the Nong Khai District.

During his stay in Bangkok, the GVSU education professor awarded 10 scholarships to students attending Thabo High School through the Dr. Faite R-P Mack Family Conservancy Foundation and the Education for Humanity Project.



Faite Mack experiences a high school classroom setting in Bangkok, Thailand.

Distinguished Guest Scholar Brings Diverse View To GVSU

The School of Education at Grand Valley State University is enhancing its global perspective with the expertise of Distinguished Guest Scholar Dr. Harold Herman from the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa.

Herman — who is accompanied by his wife, Marcia, son Kurt and daughter Hayley -- will remain at GVSU through the spring semester of 2001. Kurt is enrolled at the GVSU School of Business, while Hayley is a senior at Jenison High School.

"I've certainly enjoyed being here, getting to know the local community, meeting students and sharing with colleagues in the School of Education," Herman said.

At GVSU, Herman is teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, including classes in multicultural education, diversity and current issues in education.

"It has been interesting to talk to students about multiculturalism," Herman said. "South Africa is a place where the East and the West and Africa sort of all meet, which makes it one of the

most diverse countries in the world."

Herman is a professor of international education by trade, but his focus is on international education issues dealing with school quality, policy and educational reform. He is a former vice president of the World Congress of Comparative Education.



Harold Herman

World Congress of

Literacy Experts Converge in Australia

The Summer Olympic Games weren't the only things going on in Australia this year, as a couple of School of Education professors can attest.

In July, Caryn King led a delegation of literacy educators from around the United States to both New Zealand and Australia. Those two countries, along with the United States, are among the most literate countries in the world, according to King.

"Like us, they have a lot of diversity," King said. "They do a great job teaching their kids to read and write."

The 50-person delegation, which also included professor Barbara Reinken and GVSU graduate Rita McLary, visited both primary classrooms and university settings in both countries.

"We wanted to see theory in action so we went in and saw first hand what they're teaching in areas of literacy," King said.

The group also heard presentations by educators Dr. Len Unsworth from the University of Sydney and Marie Clay from Auckland College of Education in New Zealand. Clay is renowned for developing a reading recovery program for first-grade students that allowed them — after intense one-on-one instruction at an early age — to catch up and remain at the levels of other students throughout their school years.

Konecki Visits New Zealand Schools

School of Education professor Loretta Konecki spent four months in the country of New Zealand earlier this year where she visited five institutions of higher learning and 16 public schools, and attended a series of presentations, conferences and workshops on cultural safety.

Based on her findings, Konecki plans to implement some of the New Zealand approaches to education in curriculum development and issues in education classes at GVSU, along with making four regional presentations based on her findings.