

The Visitor

Devoted to the Interests of Agricultural Education in Minnesota Schools

Vol. LIX

October 1972

No. 4

A REPORT FROM KOREA

Milo J. Peterson
Agricultural Education
University of Minnesota

Many readers of *The Visitor* have served a variety of duty tours in foreign lands. One is tempted to mention names, but the list would be endless. However, it seems appropriate to remember the contribution of the late Dr. Harry W. Kitts as a soldier and agricultural educator at home and abroad in times of peace as well as armed conflict.

This report will concern itself with a specific project in a specific country, the Republic of Korea. The Republic of Korea encompasses about the same area as Indiana, but the similarity ends there. South Korea has a population of about 33 million and a population density of about 800 to 900 people per square mile. Indiana has a population density of about 144 people per square mile.

Compared to Minnesota with an area of about 80,000 square miles and a population density of 48 people per square mile, the Republic of Korea presents a marked contrast. This, in itself, suggests the necessity of "cutting the cloth to fit the pattern" in agricultural education as well as any other enterprise.

WHY ARE WE HERE?

It may seem redundant to ask the question "Why are we here?", but it is appropriate. Korea is basically rural with its economy rooted in agriculture. Seoul, the capitol city, has a population of over 5,000,000 and suffers all of the problems of urban sprawl that plague large centers of population around the world. Migrants from rural to urban centers continue to aggravate the inner city problem.

Low farm income and an accompanying low status of agriculture is a major contributory cause for migration from farm to city. As a consequence, the government of Korea is giving high priority to improving farm income and the level of living in rural communities. The New Village Movement is a major part of the Five Year Plan presently being initiated. Thankfully, this is in total harmony with the community school philosophy on which the vocational agriculture program of the United States is founded.

Thus evolved the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) Project which finds your correspondent half-

way around the world doing the vocational agriculture bit in an environment so different from the U.S.A. that one has to live it to understand it. Nevertheless there seems to be a universally common philosophy among vo-ag men and a universally shared set of principles and objectives. The problems arise in the area of practice, putting the philosophy into action, which is always the toughest, and most important step in the process.

At this point in time, Minnesota (or any other state in the U.S.A.) with a strong and active NVATA membership and State Vo-Ag Teachers Association, can well serve as a model for a basic ingredient of rural development. Our prime reason for being here is to *strengthen* and *improve* the vocational agriculture program at the community level. This includes teacher education. Our responsibility must be to do our best to understand Korean culture and values, to figure out ways to contribute to the enrichment of the life of the man on the land. It becomes a problem of adaptation, adoption and assimilation. It is a long term process; the day of instant miracles has passed. Sadly, however, the day of the "instant expert" persists. This constitutes a major obstacle.

ABOUT KOREA

Korea, with a recorded history of more than 4,000 years, is an ancient country. It has been invaded, occupied and exploited throughout the centuries, most recently by the thirty-six years of Japanese occupation which ended with the conclusion of World War II. It is now a divided land with a Communist regime north of the 38th parallel and a Republic government in South Korea. Nevertheless the Korean people have maintained their own culture, value systems and character. The Koreans are perhaps the "purest" nation in the civilized world in terms of unmixed blood. Until the recent infusion of the American G.I., Koreans almost exclusively united in marriage with Koreans. There were of course exceptions during the Japanese occupation.

We have found the Korean people to be friendly, happy, patriotic, hardworking and fiercely proud of Korea. There is much we can learn from this land and its people. Hopefully, we may be able to contribute something to the advancement of agricultural education in return.

This hope is complicated by small farms (average about 3-5 acres), almost total depen-

dence on hand labor and Korean cattle power, lack of rural electrical power, an underdeveloped farm credit system, and a rather primitive marketing process save for rice and tobacco.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

As previously indicated, this project is financed by a World Bank loan to the Korean government. The Project Team consists of eight technical consultants including one chief educational consultant and one each in mechanical, automotive, electrical, civil engineering, and commercial education. Two consultants in agriculture complete the roster of consultants. Eight Korean counterparts make up the balance of the Project Team.

The chief educational consultant is scheduled for a three year tour of duty as are each of the Korean counterparts. The mechanical consultant, who also has major responsibility for teacher education, is scheduled for two years. The remaining consultants have eighteen months in which to accomplish their objectives.

Prior to the arrival of the educational consultants, a team of architects prepared building plans and specifications for the classrooms, shops and laboratories for the Project Schools. These included the College of Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Education of Seoul National University and several agricultural high schools. While our work is not limited to the Project Schools, they receive the major share of our time and effort.

Because the consultants were recruited singly and reported for duty over a four month period the termination dates of both consultants and counterparts are staggered. (Editors note: Not staggering). This will either result in more orderly completion of the Project or a bit of confusion in compiling the final reports and recommendations. One very desirable aspect of the Project is that it will place gradually increasing responsibility on the Korean counterparts, and thus test their absorptive capacity and degree of adaptability to change.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE VO-AG PROGRAM

Since no other country in the world has an educational system similar to the U.S.A., it is most important in developing understanding to "walk in another man's shoes". Korea has a highly developed system of vocational agriculture at the secondary and collegiate level. The facilities of the Department of Agricultural Education at Seoul National University are far superior to most I have seen. There are certain gaps in equipment, but by and large the physical plant and the quality of staff are on a par with any institution I know. I should add (with considerable emphasis) that this does not include heating for classrooms or offices to offset the rigorous winter climate. Hopefully this situation will be ameliorated in the new construction underway. Under present conditions, however, the standard winter uniform for professors includes heavy underwear, sweaters, and an electric plate for hot coffee.

Seoul National University, the most prestigious university in Korea, graduates more vo-ag teachers than any other institution. It is also looked to by the Ministry of Education as the source of in-service training and professional upgrading for vocational agriculture.

The agricultural high schools are equipped with a more or less complete campus. The curriculum embodies 50% academic or general education and 50% technical agriculture. The school farms, some of which are gems of opportunity, are the main source of supervised farming programs, or farm practice as it is more commonly called.

Adult education in agriculture is extremely limited. No systematic organized program has been observed. Such activity as exists consists of occasional visits to a nearby village to provide information to farmers. A few schools hold meetings for farmers at periodic intervals, maybe twice a year, and there are times when farmers may visit a school farm to observe crop varieties and cultural practices.

A major problem contributing to the practically nonexistent on-farm instruction is lack of transportation for the teachers. Almost all have bicycles and on rare occasions one finds a teacher with a motorcycle. However, these are inadequate for on-farm instruction. The Korean teachers and school officials are acutely aware of this limitation and its retarding influence on program improvement.

On May 4, 1972, the National Association of the Future Farmers of Korea was inaugurated. At the same time a National FFK Foundation was also established. The importance of this event can be illustrated by the dignitaries who participated in the day-long ceremonies. These included the Premier of Korea, a top Presidential advisor (PhD from Minnesota), the Minister of Education, the

Vol. LIX THE VISITOR No. 4

Published quarterly during the calendar year in January, April, July and October by the

Department of Agricultural Education,
University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minn. 55101

Second class postage paid at St. Paul, Minn.

THE STAFF

ROLAND L. PETERSON GEORGE COPA
FORREST BEAR GORDON SWANSON
EDGAR PERSONS CURTIS NORENBURG
MILO J. PETERSON

R. PAUL MARVIN, *Editor*

Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, the Provincial Governor, the Dean of the College of Agriculture (PhD from Minnesota), and the Vice-President of the American Korean Foundation. Also participating were the two agriculture consultants (Milo Peterson and Lambert Schilling) and a representative of the Peavey Company of the U.S.A.-Korea branch operations. Six hundred and twenty FFK delegates and one hundred and seventy-five FFK advisors representing every agricultural high school in the Republic of Korea filled the auditorium of the College of Agriculture to capacity.

This event was a vocational agriculture spectacular of the first magnitude and hopefully a significant step forward.

The in-service training program for teachers of agriculture is well organized and utilizes an all-star cast of outstanding professors, many of whom are internationally famous. The program is also a strenuous one for the one hundred and fifty selected teachers who attend the annual session. It runs eight hours a day, five and one half days a week for eight weeks during July and August.

Teachers successfully completing the courses receive a salary increment and a step advance in their certification. They receive reimbursement for their transportation and living expenses during the eight week period. No college or graduate credit is granted. This year marked the tenth annual in-service training program conducted by the College of Agriculture of Seoul National University. The Department of Agricultural Education is responsible for organizing and administering the program with the Ministry of Education providing the budget.

IN BENEDICTION

Any contribution Mr. Schilling and I can make to vocational agriculture in Korea will, of course, not be evident during the eighteen months we are here. The burden of responsibility will fall most heavily on our counterparts and their colleagues. The leadership of the Ministry of Education will also be crucial in this highly centralized system.

In any event the support we have received from Mr. Neville Hunsicker in the U.S. Office of Education and Mr. Lennie Gamage and others at the National FFA Center, merit special thanks. An expression of gratitude is also due the vo-ag teachers, FFA members and agricultural education supervisors who have contributed books and aided in the FFA-FFK Chapter-to-Chapter program. Finally a tip of the hat to my colleagues at the University of Minnesota and at Dunwoody Industrial Institute who have made possible this enriching professional experience.

While we are enjoying our stay in Korea (The Land of the Morning Calm) we are also looking forward to returning to the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes.

HUMAN RELATIONS TRAINING

Myron Nelson
University of Minnesota

At a time when record numbers of children are attending school, and for longer periods of time, it appears that the ability to relate positively to other humans is more critical than ever.

The 1971 Department of Education regulation requiring human relations components in all programs leading to certification has generated interest at all levels of teaching, all fields of teacher training and in administration. Components regarded as satisfactory are those that include plans to develop the ability of applicants (for certification) to:¹

- (a) understand the contributions and lifestyles of the various racial, cultural, and economic groups in our society,
- (b) recognize and deal with dehumanizing biases, discrimination and prejudices,
- (c) create learning environments which contribute to a parity of esteem among all persons as well as to positive interpersonal relations, and to
- (d) respect human diversity and personal rights.

Teacher education institutions are engaged in presenting plans to the state education agencies showing that programs have been developed that include the contribution of community groups. The Human Relations program must also include means for assessing competencies possessed by those entering teaching. School Districts are establishing committees, programs, workshops and other instructive mechanisms in Human Relations for teachers applying for certificate renewal.

Activities designed to satisfy the above objectives are ordinarily developed in two main categories: intercultural and interpersonal.

The intercultural category may include value clarification; recognition of biases, prejudices and stereotype statements; use of audiovisual materials on socio-cultural development; or role playing involving minority persons.

The interpersonal category may include activities developed around communication skills, classroom management, problem solving, community involvement, and team building (staff development). Specific activities might begin with assessment of felt needs and goal statements (competencies). They might embrace such approaches as paraphrasing, feedback, group process activities, problem ownership, and the effect of one's behavior on others.

FREQUENT REACTIONS TO HUMAN RELATIONS PROGRAMS

The following questions may be posed and responses developed to inform teachers and community about Human Relations training.

1. Is there a problem? Experienced teachers and administrators agree in rating student behavior and poor classroom management as the most frequent deterrent to teaching and learning. To be effective, teachers must understand and be able to deal with undesirable student behavior in the classroom, shop and in confrontations away from the school complex. Further development of competency in human relations is necessary for the experienced teacher as well as prospective ones if it is assumed that such skills are effective in dealing with "discipline" problems.

2. If objectives of Human Relations training are understood, isn't that enough? There is a long, country mile between understanding and practice. Vocational teachers have accepted measures of competence and performance as valid indicators of understanding. One learns from communication, but the addition of relevant experience is considered essential.

3. Should activities in a workshop be threatening to participants? The objectives and competencies desired in a human relations training program can be attained with exercises that do not necessarily embarrass individuals. A qualified trainer or consultant is familiar with skill building techniques and should select only those acceptable to the group. Ideally, any individual should have alternatives to choose from and should be free to opt out of those which he feels are disagreeable.²

4. Have any of the benefits been proven? Benefits to the public school student, or "product", have not been proven in this review of literature. Measurement and precise design over periods of time have not been characteristic of this development. However, reviews and summaries of some of the recent studies show that public school students are enthusiastic about human relations activities that affect them.³ Research studies by D. Berenson⁴ and by G. Gazada⁵ involved student teachers in classroom settings, and concluded that the "trained" groups were better able to communicate with students and were rated more competent in the classroom. Bowers and Soar⁶ found that a person who did not have personality resources sufficient to the requirements of the training reacted by increased defensiveness.

5. Haven't teacher educators always perceived human relations training as a part of their teacher preparation in the field of education? True, however the new regulation 521 deals with concerns recently expressed by

community leaders, minority groups, teacher training institutions, teachers and MEA and MFT leaders.

SUMMARY

Certain elements of Human Relations training have always been incorporated into teacher preparation. However, some competents have been added because groups have expressed need for protection against discrimination and concerns over basic human rights. State regulations attempt to insure that teachers possess specific competencies as defined by the school district or the teacher education institution and as approved by the State Department of Education.

Training sessions should reflect needs of the teachers, as well as input from school administration and the community. They can be structured by trainers and consultants so that exercises are non-threatening to individuals.

The consequences of current human relations training for prospective and in-service teachers have been assumed, rather than demonstrated, but the experiences and conclusions described in the literature suggest that positive reactions will far outweigh the negative ones. The complexity of today's schools, and society in general, require more competencies in the affective domain than ever before.

Footnotes

¹"Components to be included in all programs leading to certification in Education, Chapter 27: Education 520-539" (Department of Education, State of Minnesota, Feb. 1971).

²Buchanan, M. M., "Preparing teachers to be persons." *Phi Delta Kappan* 52:614-17 Je '71.

³Doll, H.D., "These districts teach human relations painlessly, not aimlessly; PACE (Program for action by citizens in education). *Cuyahoga County, Ohio American School Board Journal* 158:24-5 Je '71.

⁴Berenson, D.H. "Effects of systematic human relations training upon classroom performance of elementary school teachers." *Journal of Research and Development Education* 4:70-85. Winter '71.

⁵Gazda, G.M. "Systematic human relations training in teacher preparation and inservice education." *Journal of Research and Development Education* 4:47-51. Winter '71.

⁶N. Bowers and R. Soar, "Studies of Human Relations in the Teaching-Learning Process Final Report." (Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Cooperative Research Branch, Contract #8143, 1961). p. 153-154.