

Report on the

National Symposium on the future of Australia-Korea school partnerships

29, 30 August and 1 September 2023

ieaa
International Education
Association of Australia



Supported by



Australian Government



Australia-Korea FOUNDATION

About IEAA

International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) is Australia's leading association for international education. We strive to empower professionals, engage institutions and enhance Australia's reputation as a provider of world-class education. We provide advocacy; deliver high-quality professional learning; and drive new research to highlight emerging trends, inform strategy and policy, and enrich the sector's knowledge.

Acknowledgements

The National Symposium on the future of Australia-Korea school partnerships, this follow-up report and accompanying digital resources have been supported through a grant from the [Australia-Korea Foundation](#).

IEAA acknowledges the contributions of the following individuals to the National Symposium on the future of Australia-Korea school partnerships:

- Professor Kent Anderson, The University of Newcastle, Australia, and Australia-Korea Business Council
- Yuna Cho, Kyodong Primary School
- Kyu Choi, KBS World News Today
- Associate Professor Joanna Elfving-Hwang, Curtin University
- Emeline Gillingham, Asia Education Foundation
- Hon. Phil Honeywood, International Education Association of Australia
- Dr Kirrilee Hughes, International Education Association of Australia
- Jin Kwon, Korean Education Centre
- Kim Peters, Hillside Collegiate International School
- Janine Pitt, Australian Department of Education
- Jennifer Star, Asia Education Foundation
- Lesley Street, Principal, Mount Lawley Senior High School
- Brad Wilke, Bomaderry High School

IEAA also recognises Australian Government Schools International (AGSI), Independent Schools Australia (ISA) and the Australia-Korea Business Council for supporting this project as well as Dr Kirrilee Hughes, IEAA Research Manager, for compiling and editing this report.

Additionally, Associate Professor Joanna Elfving-Hwang (see pages 10 and 11 of this report) acknowledges the support of an Australia-Korea Foundation Grant AKF00863 (2022-2025) for a project entitled 'Development of Korean language education in Western Australian schools' (Curtin University).

Cover image: Shutterstock

Suggested citation

International Education Association of Australia (IEAA), *Report on the National Symposium on the future of Australia-Korea school partnerships*, IEAA, 2023.

Table of contents

Foreword: Hon. Phil Honeywood	4
Introduction: Professor Kent Anderson	5
Alumni spotlight	6
Government priorities	8
Case studies	
Case study: Korean language education in Australian schools - Joanna Elfving-Hwang, Sophia Ammali and Lesley Street	10
Case study: Australia-Korea BRIDGE program - Asia Education Foundation	12
Case study: Virtual professional experience program - Brad Wilke	14
Case study: South Australian Certificate of Education in Korea - Kim Peters	15
Case study: Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education's online language exchanges - Yuna Cho	17
Key learnings	18
Further resources	19

Foreword

This follow-up report to IEAA's 'National Symposium on the future of Australia-Korea school partnerships' serves to share key learnings, ensure accessibility and deepen impact of the information and insights that were presented during the symposium.

Held over 29 August, 30 August and 1 September 2023, the symposium brought together more than 240 school leaders, educators, policy makers and a diverse range of other school stakeholders from both Australia and Korea. These included representatives from Australia's Department of Education, Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education, Korean Education Centre, Austrade, Asia Education Foundation, Australia-Korea Business Council and Australian state and territory based Departments of Education and study clusters.

Over three days, participants heard from a range of expert speakers regarding existing models for Australia-Korea school partnerships, Korean language education in Australia, case studies of recent innovative Australia-Korea school partnerships and government priorities for the future of bilateral school partnerships. Our symposium was a unique learning opportunity for attendees as Australia-Korea school partnerships are often not explored in-depth through other international education fora. On behalf of IEAA, I extend my gratitude to symposium attendees, speakers and hosts for contributing to this milestone event. I also acknowledge the support of the Australia-Korea Foundation grants program, which facilitated the design and delivery of this National Symposium.

The International Education Association of Australia is Australia's leading association for international education. We strive to empower professionals, engage institutions and enhance Australia's reputation as a provider of world-class education. We provide advocacy and member services relevant to professional staff, academics and teachers across all sectors, including schools.

IEAA delivers high-quality professional learning – such as the National Symposium on the future of Australia-Korea school partnerships – to advance members' careers and enhance the quality of Australian international education. Through this symposium, and our successful Australia-Korea Foundation grant which supported it, IEAA celebrates the work of our members and other stakeholders who work in and with schools.

One of the most important aspects of school partnerships are the people-to-people connections which they seed. For students, when this occurs during their formative years, they become a catalyst for life-long bilateral connections and contribute to closer, stronger relationships between Australia and Korea. This highlights the significance of school partnerships within the broader context of international education.



Hon. Phil Honeywood
CEO, IEAA



View the opening plenary of the National Symposium
<http://youtu.be/GbNVvMXIZsM>

Introduction

In November 2022, the Australia-Korea Business Council commissioned a White Paper entitled *Bridges to the future* which explored student mobility, research and education partnerships between Australia and Korea.

The focus of this report, however, was post-secondary and higher education as well as research collaboration. When IEAA approached the Council in early 2023 seeking suggestions for a National Symposium on the future of Australia-Korea school partnerships, we saw this as a unique, complementary activity that would help build a comprehensive picture of bilateral education between Korea and Australia across all sectors.

The number of symposium registrations and the enthusiasm from participants, from both Australia and Korea, in developing productive and positive bilateral school partnerships has exceeded all expectations. I'm looking forward to seeing how the connections forged through this National Symposium continue into the future and what fruit they bear.

Throughout the symposium, it became clear that a common critical success factor for Australia-Korea schools partnerships is the presence of dedicated 'champions'. I hope that this symposium inspires participants to champion Australia-Korea partnerships in classrooms and with students; in schools and institutions; across school jurisdictions; and through the other roles that symposium participants are involved in.

As an online symposium, I was delighted to zoom in from Busan, Korea. I'm encouraged that we can use this format in the future to keep old friendships fresh and also in the initial stages of an education partnership. The blended format matches the experience of many of our students, providing a good opportunity to learn from them.

It is important that school partnerships include Korean and English language education and intercultural studies but also that they focus on developing people-to-people connections and friendships. When we're able to do this with our youngest learners – school students – we're able to create connections and learnings which they will carry through their post-secondary studies, their careers and into the other spheres of their lives.



Professor Kent Anderson

Deputy Vice-Chancellor - Global, The University of Newcastle,
Australia
Chair, Education Sub-Committee, Australia-Korea Business
Council



View Professor Kent Anderson's closing comments to the National Symposium:
<http://youtu.be/oPzawkUZBMw>



Alumni spotlight

Kyu Choi is an International News Anchor at Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), South Korea's leading public broadcaster. Kyu undertook part of her high school education at St Aidan's Anglican Girls School in Queensland and is also an alumnus of The University Sydney.

As the main anchor for 'KBS World News Today', Kyu reports on major events both in South Korea and internationally, reaching viewers in over 160 countries. Her work highlights significant moments for South Koreans, from the COVID-19 response to major political events. Kyu's role at KBS is not just limited to anchoring; she has also interviewed top figures in entertainment and finance as a TV reporter and has managed news content production for programs like 'Global 24' and 'News Today'. With her unwavering dedication, Kyu is committed to elevating the standards and prominence of Korean journalism.

Kyu provided an inspiring keynote address at the commencement of the symposium. She emphasised the transformative power of cross-cultural collaboration and educational exchange. She also highlighted the role of a supportive school community in her journey to overcoming language barriers, celebrating her identity and learning to value courage and attitude over 'perfection'. This perspective has shaped her career as one of KBS' only non-Caucasian, female, English-speaking news presenters. She has also been able to offer Australian perspectives to regional news broadcasts.



View Kyu Choi's complete keynote address:

<http://youtu.be/GbNVvMXIZsM>

“

‘I was chosen as one of KBS’ first non-Caucasian, female English news anchors and when I reflect on that moment, I see it as not just as a professional achievement, but as proof of the mindset nurtured during my years in Australia. I learned not to allow doubts about my age, gender or background get in the way of what I want to achieve.’

‘Every challenge, every success I’ve experienced can be traced back to the foundation laid during my schooling years in Australia. This isn’t just about school exchanges or academic collaboration. It’s about moulding young minds to view the world with broader horizons, to recognise their unique strengths and to understand that their paths can lead into something meaningful and great in their own way.’

‘It was at St. Aidan’s where I learned that differences didn’t isolate me; they celebrated me. Instead of seeing a girl who couldn’t speak fluent English, (my school) community saw me as a young, brave girl that had the ability to speak two languages.’

”



Image: Unsplash

Government priorities for the future of Australia-Korea school partnerships

Australian perspectives

The Australian Curriculum emphasises the significance of Australian students learning about their country's regional role through cross-curriculum priorities, including Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia. This priority covers three key concepts: understanding Asia's diversity, recognising Asia's global importance and fostering Asia-Australia engagement.

Australia's educational relationship with Korea is long-established and there are increasing opportunities for deeper collaboration. The Australian Department of Education and Korea's Ministry of Education regularly meet through a Joint Committee on Education. The most recent high-level meeting of the two education portfolios, in March 2023 in Seoul, provides a strong base for both countries' engagement across the school sector.

The Australian Embassy in Seoul actively engages with Korean stakeholders in various schools programs. One avenue is through the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education through programs such as open houses and Online Language Exchanges. The Open House project began in 2018 and involves all embassies and foreign missions in Korea, introducing their country, culture, language and society to Korean middle and high school students. This

engagement allows the Australian Embassy to welcome Korean students and provide insights into the Embassy's activities, fostering positive and strong connections. Another project is the Australia-Korea Online Language Exchange, delivered in collaboration with the New South Wales Department of Education. Currently, 11 Australian schools are paired with 12 Korean schools to enhance their English language programs and a case study of a primary school partnership is provided later in this report. Another initiative is the Australia Korea Connection program, where Korean students teach their culture to Australian peers in English, while also learning about Australian culture. Data from students and teachers shows that this program boosts Korean students' global perspective, English confidence and communication skills.

The Australian government acknowledges several challenges in terms of Australia-Korea school partnerships. One key challenge lies in virtual engagement, which requires a collective effort, not just from individual educators but also from school principals to establish and sustain connections. School education in both Korea and Australia is administered at a sub-national level. Australian state and territory governments, Korean provincial jurisdictions and individual schools determine language and other subject



Image: Wikimedia

offerings and curriculum, resulting in variations that can be challenging to navigate. Determining the starting point for a school partnership can be a very daunting task which requires careful consideration and planning.

Korean perspectives

The Korean government also recognises the importance of educational exchanges, collaboration and partnerships for schools. In line with this, the Korean Government has established 43 Korean Education Centers (KEC) in 19 countries, including in Sydney, Australia. Sydney's KEC was established in 1989 and is now affiliated with the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Sydney. One element of KEC's mission is to support Korean language education in Australian schools. Financial support is provided for both new and existing programs in schools. The establishment of collaborative relationships with Australian government stakeholders is also prioritised. KECs also support teachers through training and the provision of teaching resources, including textbooks. Students are encouraged to learn Korean through various activities hosted by the KEC in Sydney such as Korean speech and cultural performance contests.

The Korean government recognises challenges in Australia-Korea school partnerships, including Korean language programs in Australian schools which have stagnated due to structural issues such as timetabling, 'room' in the curriculum and shortages of qualified teachers. Additionally, there are limitations in coordinating exchanges between Korean and Australian schools, which need more time to work on the 'basics' of these programs. Recently, Korean education authorities and schools have been keen to establish 'direct exchanges' with Australian schools, however, there are challenges in resourcing these types of partnerships.

The Korean government has identified key priorities for Australia-Korea school partnerships. These include expanding Korean language education in Australia through existing initiatives targeting schools, teachers and students as well as creating a sustainable model for teacher training. Additionally, the Korean government aims to enhance educational exchanges between Korea and Australia by strengthening the role of KEC as an exchange platform, establishing collaborations with potential Australian partners and increasing school and student exchanges between the two countries.



View government representatives from Australia and Korea discussing future priorities for Australia-Korea school partnerships:

<http://youtu.be/oPzawkUZBMw>



Authors: Joanna Elfving-Hwang, Sophia Ammali and Lesley Street

Image: Shutterstock

Case study: Korean language education in Australian schools

Whilst Korean language education is currently experiencing renewed interest and enrolments in Australian universities, there are ongoing challenges to offering Korean language subjects in Australian schools. These challenges, which include parent and student perceptions and motivation as well as shortages of qualified teachers, reflect broader issues that impact many Asian languages taught in Australian schools.

Over the last 30 years, there have been numerous federal-level policies and programs in Australia which have supported broader Asian languages education for Australian school students, including Korean. These include:

- The National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools program (NALSAS, 1995 to 2000, \$337 million in today's dollars) which prioritised four Asian languages: Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean.
- The National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP, 2008 to 2012, \$74 million in today's dollars).
- The *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*, released in 2012, which acknowledged Australia's unique political and economic relationship with Asia and called to deepen Asia literacy through cultural and linguistic understanding. The White Paper encouraged the prioritisation of four Asian languages - Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Hindi -

and did not include Korean.

- The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) recognised the significant relationship with Asia and produced the 'Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia' cross-curriculum priority. From 2014, all Australian states and territories had begun to implement the F-10 Australian Curriculum.

Whilst this appears to be a 'busy' policy landscape, in reality, this represents a 'stop start' approach. Funding for both the NALSAS and NALSSP programs was not continuous and reflects the changing priorities of different governments in Australia.

Currently, Australia has no shared commonwealth or state and territory government coordinated language action plan or policy and there has not been any substantial funding for Asian languages education since the end of the NALSSP in 2012. Compounding this is the

challenge of reliable participation data in all languages taught in Australian schools, including Korean. Data collection methods vary between state and territory governments and different schooling systems (Government, Catholic and Independent), leading to diverse approaches in recording and gathering participation data. This means it is difficult to consistently and accurately monitor national engagement in Korean language education at schools across Australia, to explore changes over time and to compare school delivery of, and student participation in, Korean to other languages.

Numerous arguments have been put forth by policymakers and advocates to rationalise the ongoing challenges in languages education in Australian schools, including a 'crowded curriculum' (that is, insufficient time in school curriculum to offer language programs that are both interesting and effective for students); Year 11 and 12 Korean subjects in some jurisdictions not being eligible for ATAR calculations which facilitate entry to university; and complex rules regarding who can and cannot enrol in Korean 'background speakers' subjects. This discourages schools from offering Korean as well as students and parents from opting to take Korean in middle and senior secondary years as an 'elective'. Additionally, many schools are reluctant to offer new languages programs due to budget constraints and lack of qualified teachers.

As with other Asian languages, Korean language education is often endorsed through a heavy focus on economic rationalism. This is articulated that learning Korean is essential for 'doing business' with Korea and is important for Australia's economic relationship with Korea. This argument has limited appeal for young learners and may not serve to motivate or inspire them. School students are more likely to become interested in a target language such as Korean through cultural exchange and without reliance on exam-centric methods. This needs to be complemented through opportunities for student exchanges and study tours as well as improving the stock of qualified and inspiring Korean teachers in Australia.

Focus on Western Australia

Despite these challenges, there has been good news out of Western Australia, where in 2023, Korean has now become an 'ATAR subject'. This means it is part of the assessment and scoring process that facilitates students' entry to university and also makes Korean attractive for those students seeking the 'language bonus' that is commonly applied.

Lesley Street, Principal of Mount Lawley Senior High School, believes this structural change is essential for encouraging more students to learn Korean in her school. In addition, she believes more qualified Korean teachers will soon be required. Lesley also identifies the role of parental support in boosting Korean language enrolments at her school and more generally across Western Australia. Many Australian parents have limited knowledge about Korea and modern Korean society, often due to their own lack of exposure to Korean language or to anyone who has studied Korean. Additionally, the small Korean community in Western Australia contributes to the scarcity of resources for raising awareness and interest in learning the Korean language.

To counter these challenges, the following suggestions focus on increasing Korean language enrolments at schools across Australia:

- Incentivising learners through subsidised school trips to Korea in senior years, which is only open to students with continued enrolment in Korean from Year 7.
- Connecting language study to the rise in global demand for Korean cultural phenomenon, such as K-Pop, gaming and streamed programming as well as Korean food. These cultural experiences may be more relevant to school students than arguments which connect language education to economics.
- Whole school support is required and 'champions', especially at the principal or school leader level, are essential, in terms of changing parent perceptions of languages education in general and of Korean in particular.



View Associate Professor Joanna Elfving-Hwang and school principal, Lesley Street, discuss Korean language education in Australian schools:
http://youtu.be/u09_0T3iywg



Authors and image: Asia Education Foundation

Case study: Australia-Korea BRIDGE program

The Australia-Korea BRIDGE ('building relationships through intercultural dialogue and growing engagement') program, managed by the Asia Education Foundation (AEF), was established with Australian government funding from 2010 to 2016 with the explicit goal of increasing participation in Korean language learning in Australian schools. The program was part of AEF's broader BRIDGE portfolio, which partners Australian schools with 23 countries across the Asia Pacific and focuses on connections between educators.

BRIDGE's core focus is on developing intercultural understanding and global competence skills, which also aligns to the Australian Curriculum's general capability of intercultural understanding and cross-curricular priority of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia. Consequently, BRIDGE is not exclusive to language teachers, although they do make up the largest group, especially for the Australia-Korea BRIDGE program. BRIDGE is accessible to all teachers, regardless of the subject they teach or the grade level they work with.

The outcome of the professional immersion which occurs during BRIDGE is a collaborative school partnership plan, which identifies common interests, themes and ways that the two schools can work together to sustain their partnership into the future. School partnership plans are built around a series of collaborative activities and focus on areas of mutual importance to both schools. These can be at educator level, such as sharing resources and fostering best practices; the student level, such as using technology to connect students online in real-time to develop language skills; or at the school community level,

such as a collaborative oral history project, in which cultural stories were collected from the wider community and were published into a book, enriching both school libraries with community narratives. Throughout the program, professional collaboration grows connections between participating teachers, creating a personal 'stake' in the country in which they are engaged.

BRIDGE has also contributed to other exchanges and collaborative projects, such as a Korea Professional Immersion Study Tour. The program, funded by the Korea Foundation, aims to connect Australian educators with Korea, providing them with the necessary skills to incorporate Korean culture and language into their classrooms. Typically serving as an initial exposure to Korea for Australian educators, the program often leads them to pursue more extensive and lasting engagement with Korea through the BRIDGE program or by creating their own school partnerships.

COVID-19 effected significant change on school partnerships, with travel restrictions impeding the traditional aspects of BRIDGE, such as immersion programs, homestays and educator collaboration. The importance of global connections, however, has never been more important. Leveraging new technologies, many BRIDGE school partnerships successfully adapted by moving online and continuing to facilitate meaningful connections. AEF believes this transition led to increased engagement, including participation from teachers who are not able to travel due to various family and professional constraints. BRIDGE's new online model allows teachers to seamlessly integrate these connections into their daily classroom activities and has led to the creation of 'Digital BRIDGE' from 2020 to 2023, paving the way for the program's future.



View the Asia Education Foundation present the Australia-Korea BRIDGE program:

<http://youtu.be/WcxJCcrgMmU>

Australia-Korea BRIDGE School Partnerships

72 Australia-Korea BRIDGE School Partnerships

36 reciprocal school partnerships between 2010 and 2016

Funded by the Australia-Korea Foundation

Case study: Virtual Professional Experience program

The Virtual Professional Experience program was designed as a professional experience practicum running for 20 days for pre-service teachers from La Trobe University in Victoria and students attending schools in Korea. The program took place between July and November 2021 amidst closed borders and lockdowns and was conducted entirely remotely through video conferencing technology. Participating Australian students received funding through the Australian Government's New Colombo Plan.

The rationale for this program reflects the growing English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) student population in Australian schools which the NSW Department of Education estimates grew from 20.3% in 2015 to 23.7% in 2019. Australian teachers are increasingly required to teach and cater for the needs of EAL/D students in mainstream classrooms. Cultural responsiveness is now also recognised as a core content area in teacher education programs in Australia.

From the Korean perspective, local English curriculum requires teachers to implement a communicative approach. Korean teachers are increasingly required to teach students from multicultural backgrounds in mainstream classes. Whilst intercultural understanding is increasingly recognised as an aspirational goal of teacher education programs at Korean universities, there are limited opportunities for active engagement with Australian schools.

The Virtual Professional Experience program was informed by a research phase in 2018-2019, which played a pivotal role in informing planning and development of the La Trobe program. The program's structure consisted of four induction sessions, each lasting 90 minutes, followed by participating pre-service teachers teaching at least four one-hour lessons weekly for 10 weeks. Some of the key challenges included

identification of all relevant key stakeholders and obtaining approvals for the program's implementation.

During the program, other logistical challenges arose, including time zone differences, mismatched public holidays, language barriers, working with children checks and handling various contingencies such as scheduling and supervision.

The induction sessions provided a valuable opportunity to foster participants' understanding of Korean language and culture, even if they were not physically in Korea. The program offered a unique chance for pre-service teachers to gather student work samples as well as to receive feedback from students, a crucial aspect of Australian professional experience practicums. Additionally, participating pre-service teachers gained a deeper understanding of various modes of English teaching, including English as a foreign language.

The following individuals and organisations are also acknowledged for their support of this program:

- Ms Jan Drew, Director, The Global Student;
- Dr Jacolyn Weller, Senior Lecturer, La Trobe University; and
- Mrs Ke Hyang Lee, Program Coordinator, Global L2 Education Ltd.



View Brad Wilke, who worked on the design and delivery of this program, discuss its various components:

<http://youtu.be/hW3HDAEpHtw>



Author: Kim Peters

Image: Hillside Collegiate International School

Case study: South Australian Certificate of Education in Korea

The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) is a well-established, internationally respected and recognised pre-university program that provides entry into universities globally.

It offers a diverse range of over 100 subjects to match individual student talents and career pathways. In 2023, SACE has been implemented at Hillside Collegiate International School in Korea, making it the first Australian curriculum to be available to students and parents in Korea.

Many Korean families choose international schools for their children in line with preferences for active learning and practical application of knowledge. SACE allows these students to excel by enabling them to learn, apply and express their knowledge in a more flexible manner. Upon completion of Grade 12, students receive their official SACE graduate certificate as well as an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank). The ATAR is a score that facilitates entry to university in Australia and is convertible to university entry systems used globally, including in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and across Europe. Current data from SACE

International shows that 12% of graduates enter North American and UK universities, 34% enter universities across Asia and 54% of SACE graduates enter Australian universities. In 2023, SACE has over 40,000 international alumni.

Kim Peters, Principal of Hillside Collegiate International School, believes SACE stands out by offering students in-depth learning opportunities without the need for extensive memorisation for exams. In Stage 1 (Year 11), teachers have the autonomy to create assessment plans without any external written exams or government-imposed plans. In Stage 2 (Year 12), the school assessment section is worth 70% of the final grade with external assessment comprising 30%. This means students can benefit from assessments that maximise their academic achievements. Furthermore, SACE International offers effective and prompt support.



SACE International provides two academic cycles: one aligned with the Northern Hemisphere (July start) and the other with the Southern Hemisphere (February start), which matches the Australian academic calendar. The Northern Hemisphere cycle is synchronised to school calendars across Asia. These cycles do affect the range of subjects students can choose from; if students follow the Australian (Southern Hemisphere) calendar, they have more subject options.

Kim Peters believes that SACE differs from other curricula in terms of the flexibility provided to students to follow their specific passions and interests. For example, a student whose interests lie in creative arts, would be required to study mathematics and sciences in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program as well as to submit an extended essay. In the SACE curriculum, however, they could opt for creative arts, visual arts, English and up to 3 other subjects that align with their interests and future career aspirations. Kim believes that by studying subjects that align with their interests, students are more motivated to invest significant effort in their senior years.



View Kim Peters, Principal of Hillside Collegiate International School, discuss implementing SACE:
<http://youtu.be/hW3HDAEpHtw>

Image: Hillside Collegiate International School

Case study: Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education's online language exchanges

As online education became the mainstay during COVID-19, the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education launched the Online Language Exchange (OLE) program in 2020.

This program is designed to promote language exchange, boost foreign language proficiency and to improve students' understanding of cultural diversity.

The deployment of interpretation tools and tech solutions has been central to OLE, helping students to overcome language barriers by taking part in international joint classes using translation and interpretation programs such as real-time voice interpretation and captioning features in online video conferencing programs. This year's program includes 154 schools from 14 countries.

Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education describes a three-fold purposes to the OLE program:

- Improve students' understanding of multilingualism and cultural diversity.
- Provide opportunities to practise foreign languages and develop communication skills in international classroom settings.
- Encourage international friendships to help students grow as global citizens.

The OLE is offered in three settings:

- 'Mother tongue' which utilises translation programs, allowing students to speak in their native languages, with on-screen subtitles displayed in both languages.
- 'Language of the other country' in which students from one country use the language of the other, promoting language exchange.
- 'Exclusive English' in which both sets of students converse exclusively in English, facilitating cross-cultural communication.

Yuna Cho teaches at Kyodong Primary School in Seoul and has participated in the OLE with her students. They were partnered with Concord West Public School in NSW, Australia, in 2021.

Through the OLE, Yuna said that students from both schools conversed in each other's languages, explored their diverse cultures and formed friendships. Teachers coordinated class schedules and topics and adapted materials based on language proficiency.

Classes focused on topics related to everyday life so as to be relevant and interesting to students. This encouraged the sharing of cultural practices and collaboration on joint activities. Initially, Yuna's students felt nervous about meeting peers from different parts of the world. As they continued to interact through sessions and to talk about topics such their schools, their families and everyday life, this fear dissipated. Yuna and her students also sought assistance from organisations outside their school, including the Australian Embassy, to facilitate their online learning about Australia and to deepen their cultural knowledge.



View Yuna Cho from Kyodong Primary School discuss the OLE program:

<http://youtu.be/hW3HDAEpHtw>



Image: Shutterstock

Key learnings

The case studies above highlight the benefits of Australia-Korea school partnerships, underscoring their importance to school communities in both countries.

These partnerships have the potential to enhance languages education; global competence and intercultural learning; and peer-to-peer collaboration between students, educators and school communities. Let these findings guide your path in Australia-Korea education partnerships.

- Key priorities for Australia-Korea school partnerships include expanding Korean language education in Australia, enhancing educational exchanges and increasing collaboration between education stakeholders in both countries.
- School partnerships also extend beyond language study and curricula and focus on nurturing lifelong connections that shape students' post-secondary studies, careers and personal lives.
- A dedicated champion is a critical success factor in Australia-Korea school partnerships and can foster strong connections between school leaders, educators, students and parents. There are also opportunities to draw on high profile alumni of Australia-Korea school partnerships who can inspire school communities through their personal stories focused on connection and transformation.
- Reciprocity is a key driver for the ongoing success of Australia-Korea school partnerships, particularly the ability to sustain and reciprocate efforts between school leaders, educators and policy makers. Future Australia-Korea school partnerships can prioritise intercultural and global citizenship skills and also extend opportunities to educators of all subjects and grade levels, contributing to a whole-of-school approach to global education.
- Cultural responsiveness and intercultural understanding are essential for teacher education programs in both Australia and Korea. There is scope to explore collaborative pre-service teacher training programs between Australia and Korea that focus on innovative approaches to fostering global citizenship skills for educators.

Further resources

Asia Education Foundation, *What works: School partnerships in a digital age*, June 2023

https://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/docs/default-source/bridge/digital-bridge/what-works-report-digital-bridge.pdf?sfvrsn=b41a071e_4

Australia-Korea Business Council, *Bridges to the future*, November 2022

<https://www.akbc.com.au/publications/report-akbc/education-report-bridges-future>

Australia-Korea Foundation grants

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/foundations-councils-institutes/australia-korea-foundation/grants>

Australian Curriculum, *Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia*, Version 8.4

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/cross-curriculum-priorities/asia-and-australia-s-engagement-with-asia/>

Australian Government, *Australia in the Asian century* White Paper, 2012

Korean Education Centre, Sydney

<http://english.auskec.kr/>



Image: Korean Education Centre

ieaa

International Education
Association of Australia



Australian Government



Australia-Korea FOUNDATION

Contact us

☎ +613 9925 4579

✉ admin@ieaa.org.au

ieaa.org.au

