



Submission No 53

Inquiry into Australia's Relations with the Republic of Korea; and Developments on the Korean Peninsula

Organisation: NSW Board of Studies

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Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with the Republic of Korea

Issue

Suspension of the Korean Beginners Course for the HSC.

Background

The Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is conducting an inquiry into Australia's relations with Korea. In July the Board made a submission to the Committee's inquiry, particularly in relation to the teaching of Korean in NSW schools. The Committee has requested further information on the reactivation of a suspended course.

Current Situation

The Sub-Committee has sought clarification from the Board of Studies on how the Board would give consideration to reactivating the course and revising the syllabus in HSC Korean Beginners (see attached email). Two specific questions were asked:

- 1. How would the Board gauge that there is sufficient interest in a suspended course to warrant it being reactivated?**
- 2. Would you provide examples of suspended HSC courses being reactivated, or of Board Endorsed Courses becoming Board Developed Courses at the HSC? What were the reasons for the change in status?**

- 1. How would the Board gauge that there is sufficient interest in a suspended course to warrant it being reactivated?**

In reviewing suspended courses the Board of Studies would consider such issues as:

- i) enrolment trends up to the time that the course was suspended. In the case of Korean Beginners there has never been a viable candidature since the course's inception. Since 1994 the average candidature for Beginners is less than 1 candidate per year. The maximum number of candidates in any year was 4 in 1999. For four of the last six years there have been no Year 12 candidates in Korean Beginners, while in the other two years there was a single candidate.
 - ii) inquiries relating to the course. There have been very few inquiries from schools or individuals concerning Korean Beginners. There seems to have been little interest in the change.
 - iii) monitoring of demographic and immigration trends. Frequently the interest in studying a language comes from first generation immigrants. By the time a second generation comes to HSC study there is often a significant decline in the candidature.
- 2. Would you provide examples of suspended HSC courses being reactivated, or of Board Endorsed Courses becoming Board Developed Courses at the HSC? What were the reasons for the change in status?**

In May 2003 the Board endorsed the Australasian Curriculum Assessment Certification Authorities' (ACACA) proposal for the suspension and reactivation of very small candidature CCAFL languages. It is now Board policy that when the number of candidates falls below 15 on a national basis in each of three consecutive years, the course will be suspended. Therefore, the process of suspending Languages courses has been in operation for only two years.

In 2004 the Board advised that courses in Czech, Latvian, Lithuanian and Slovenian would be suspended after the 2005 HSC examinations. Schools were advised that:

“should demand and sustainability increase to a level where the language would again become viable as an HSC course, the course may be reinstated. Should there be sufficient interest in NSW, a school may seek approval to offer one or more of these languages as a Board Endorsed School Developed Course.”

Also in 2004 the Board advised that:

“the Stage 6 Korean Beginners Syllabus will be suspended from 2007. Students entering Year 11 in 2005 will be able to sit for Korean Beginners for the Higher School Certificate in 2006, but thereafter the course will not be available as a Board Developed Course. The 2006 HSC Korean Beginners examination will be the last HSC examination for the course. Should the interest in and demand for a Beginners Korean course at the Higher School Certificate level increase, the Board will give consideration to reactivating the course and to revising the syllabus.”

A significant number of languages courses have been introduced by the NSW Board of Studies over the past twenty years. The vast majority of students undertaking Korean study the Background Speakers course for the Higher School Certificate. Since 1994, the average candidature in this course has been 150. On the other hand, the average candidatures for courses designed for non-background speakers over that time have been very small. The average candidature for Korean Continuers has been 9.

It should also be noted that there are restricted entry criteria for Beginners courses in languages. Only those students who have no experience of the language or whose experience is derived solely from 100 hours or less of the language in Years 7 to 10 are eligible to undertake the Beginners course in that language.

The Board has been responsive to changing circumstances by creating Board Developed Courses in areas previously covered by Board Endorsed Courses. Vocational Education and Training Curriculum Framework Courses are particularly noteworthy in this context. There has been a substantial decline in the number of Board Endorsed Course applications as content areas have been absorbed into the Board Developed curriculum areas. The reason for the change in status has been the demonstrated demand from students.