The utilisation of the Cross-Cultural Awareness Programme (CCAP) for the cultivation of global understanding and local cultural identity in Korea, with particular reference to Koje Island

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INTRODUCTION

As the peoples and nations of the world become closer through globalisation, we as human beings have to understand global ties and explore the place of local cultural identity in a rapidly globalising world. Schools need to provide learners with a sense of their own local cultural identities while at the same time offering a global perspective. One effective way to cultivate both the global understanding and the local cultural identity of students is through the promotion of cultural contact among diverse societies (Harvey, 1987; Hammond & Collins, 1993; Anderson, Nicklas & Crawford, 1994).

As a way to understand the diversity of cultures and develop respect for the differences that exist among peoples and nations in the world, the Cross-Cultural Awareness Programme (CCAP) was launched in September 1998 by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea. CCAP invites foreign residents in Korea to visit Korean schools in order to share the culture of their nations with Korean youth.

Based on related literature, reviews of participant reports, and program management experience, this paper will introduce the activities of CCAP in Korea, and particularly in Koje Island, analyse the present condition of CCAP, and evaluate the impact of program management. It then will offer some recommendations for the utilisation of CCAP to solve tensions between local and global cultures and to explore the role of local cultures in cultivating the global understanding of young students.

cross-cultural awareness, diversity, global understanding,
Republic of Korea, local cultures
Exchange Volunteer (CEV). Former experience in teaching children is desirable but not necessary. The only requirements for good CEVs are a sense of responsibility and interest in cultural exchange activities and volunteer work. CEVs prepare cultural exchange activities in collaboration with KIVs and school teachers. CCAP is not designed solely to provide Korean students with knowledge of specific cultures, but rather as a means for sharpening their thoughts and attitudes in favour of cultural diversity and open-mindedness in general.

**OBJECTIVES**

CCAP strives to intertwine local and global communities through a voluntary network of different people residing in Korea. More specifically, CCAP aims to:

(i) augment education for international understanding in schools by making Korean youth aware of the need for mutual understanding, cross-cultural respect and tolerance;

(ii) provide opportunities for individuals from different cultural backgrounds to share their traditions with others thereby strengthening their commitment to a community of mutual respect.

(iii) foster positive interaction between the Korean and foreign communities and create a constructive partnership through a process of open-ended dialogue between the peoples of different nations residing in Korea.

**CCAP ACTIVITIES FROM 1998 TO 2000**

During the experimental implementation period from September to November 1998, eighty CCAP classes were successfully conducted at 35 elementary, middle and high schools in Seoul and Inchon, with 61 CEVs and 34 KIVs involved. In 1999, CCAP was expanded to include 109 schools in Seoul, Inchon, Kyunggi Province, Taejon, Chunju, Chungju, Kwangju and Koje Island. In total, 114 CEVs conducted 456 CCAP classes in collaboration with 104 KIVs. In 2000 the number of participating classes (N=462) and schools (N=107) increased, and participation extended to remote areas (Korean National Commission for UNESCO, 2000; 2001).

**MAIN FEATURES OF THE CCAP**

The instructional method of CCAP is not the traditional lecture style. CEVs are advised that when they talk about cross-cultural awareness, they should refer to specific examples from their own daily lives, including what they eat, the way they greet and speak, how they play and interact with friends, and what they value in their lives. CEVs are recommended to utilise activities such as singing, dancing, cooking, sewing, drawing and so on. A CEV is guided not to provide students with knowledge of a specific culture in an encyclopaedic way. Rather, a CEV is encouraged to utilise activity-oriented instructional methodologies to develop the students’ thoughts and attitudes in favour of cultural diversity and open-mindedness. Dance, music, song and sports can often bridge the communication gap better than traditional approaches.

The CEVs are asked to try and share with Korean students those aspects of their culture that would be difficult or impossible for the students to experience through the regular school curriculum. The sharing of personal experiences, the display and discussion of cultural artefacts, teaching traditional dances, and cooking traditional dishes, are just some of the approaches that have been used.
CCAP especially tries to include CEVs from East Asian, Central American, South American and African countries which are not familiar to Korean youngsters in order to eliminate cultural misunderstandings and prejudices about those countries.

CEVs, KIVs and school teachers are equally major actors within CCAP. As a main actor a CEV is expected to be a teacher for Korean students and an unofficial diplomat for her or his country. The role of the KIVs is equally as important as that of the CEVs. As an important assistant a KIV can give further ideas and feedback about the CEV’s planned presentation in a pre-meeting. A KIV can give a CEV useful ideas from the Korean perspective and tell a CEV about students’ expectations. When the presentation is being done in the class by a CEV, a KIV is expected to manage and lead the class. Actually students are listening to a KIV’s interpretation as well as a CEV’s presentation.

Teachers at the participating school are also critical to the development of CCAP. Teachers are advised to be involved in the pre-meeting stage to give information on their students and their knowledge bases to the presentation topic. During presentation the students become attentive when the teachers are present.

**Program Management**

Volunteers can join CCAP through the internet. When completing the registration form, they identify the regions which they can visit, and choose the weekdays on which they will be available. Once volunteer registration is completed, the volunteer’s name appears on the CCAP-Net. Then a school teacher chooses a CEV & KIV from the list of volunteers who are available in their area on the day they want to have a CCAP class. After the selection is made, both the CEV and the KIV will receive a request for a CCAP class from CCAP-Net through an e-mail.

Once the volunteers accept the request, the class will be confirmed and the detailed class schedule will be sent to them. The CEV is also advised to have a class preparation meeting with her/his interpreter, and with the school teacher. A well thought out plan is essential to make a CCAP class successful and enjoyable for both students and volunteers. As part of their planning, CEVs are advised to avoid overly serious subjects that require lengthy explanations. Both the CEV and the KIV are recommended to approach the class with enthusiasm, and to try and remain responsive, flexible, and curious. A CEV needs to be prepared to answer questions about her or his personal life. Students are as much interested in a CEV as they are interested in the unique culture of the CEV’s country.

**Two Case Studies**

To illustrate the nature of the CCAP, two examples are presented. The first is based on a sixty-minute lesson presented by a CEV from Italy to a class of fifty students at an elementary school. The CEV and KIV shared the common language of English, and this was the medium of communication between them. The CEV focused the lesson on the historic buildings and old fairy tales of her home town, Martina Franca, in southern Italy, and on the Tarantella, a traditional dance of that region. Table 1 sets out the plan of the lesson.

The second example is based on an eighty minute lesson about Scotland given at a special school for the handicapped. Once again, communication between the CEV and the KIV was in English. Eight students were in the class. The lesson focused on learning Scottish folk songs and a dance, and colouring the Scottish flag. Table 2 sets out the lesson plan developed collaboratively by the CEV, the KIV and the class teacher.
Table 1. Italian Lesson Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Time (min)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Teaching Aids</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Introduce personal and family background</td>
<td>Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical buildings of</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Introduce historical buildings of Martina Franca</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martina Franca</td>
<td></td>
<td>Show pictures and postcards</td>
<td>Postcards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old fairy tale</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tell the traditional fairy tale to the students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional dance in</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Demonstrate and teach the Tarantella</td>
<td>CD Player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>southern Italy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tell story of the dance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean cultural</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Students perform a traditional Korean dance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance by students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions &amp; answers</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Question and answer session about Italy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Question students about what they learned, and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>give a gift to the student whose answer was right</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Scottish Lesson Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Time (min)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Teaching Aids</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self introduction</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Introduce personal and family background</td>
<td>Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief introduction to Scotland</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Introduce landscapes and wildlife of Scotland</td>
<td>Magazine pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling an old story about the</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Explain about the Scottish flag</td>
<td>Scottish flag in black outline on plain A4 paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish flag</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ask students to colour the blue parts of the flag</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Scottish songs and a dance</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Teach two simple Scottish songs</td>
<td>Pictures, postcards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Loch Ness monster</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Teach a traditional Scottish dance</td>
<td>Coloured modelling clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce the concept of the Loch Ness monster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and show some pictures and tell stories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ask students to make models of the Loch Ness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>monster, using coloured modelling clay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT CONDITION OF CCAP

Effects

The CCAP seeks to develop a culture of tolerance, mutual respect and peace. It provides opportunities for participants from different cultural backgrounds to share their traditions, local knowledges and wisdoms with others, thereby strengthening their commitment to a community of mutual respect. All participants, including Korean students, teachers, foreign volunteers and Korean interpretation volunteers, can deepen their understanding of each other and broaden their commitment towards these goals.

A major reason for lack of peace amongst countries is misunderstanding or rejection of the culture of the other. Because people have biases about the religions, customs and lifeways of other cultures, or make judgements about other cultures based on their own cultural perspectives, they may view the other culture as uncivilised or underdeveloped. This leads to conflicts among countries (Pike & Selby, 1988; Samover & Porter, 1995). In this sense, CCAP helps people to build a culture of peace beyond cultural prejudice and misunderstanding.

Activity reports from the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (1999; 2000; 2001) indicate that CCAP is beginning to achieve its goals of promoting a love for humanity and an unprejudiced perspective on other cultures. In a homogeneous country such as Korea, where most people have never known someone from a different ethnic background, this kind
of program is especially needed. Through participating in CCAP both students and teachers are starting to realise the common humanity of people living on ‘the one and only earth’, and that human beings are the same rather than different. At the same time, they are acquiring a less biased perspective, giving up any sense of the superiority or inferiority of their own culture compared to foreign cultures.

Not only students and teachers, but KIVs and CEVs also are beneficiaries of CCAP. For each group, several effects have been observed. Through CCAP, students and teachers can gain concrete cultural experience rather than vague cultural knowledge. Young students especially can discard cultural bias and prejudice after participating in CCAP. One student said that: “Frankly I had a vague dislike of India. I used to associate India, without knowing much about it, with beggars on the streets and think it is a messy country. But now I realise that was my prejudice about India.” Students also came to realise that Ethiopia is a country with a rich cultural heritage rather than a country of poverty and hunger.

Many students want to participate in introducing Korea to other countries. CCAP gives students a chance to think about “Do I know as much about my country as the CEV knows about her or his country?” “Can I introduce my culture to foreigners as properly as the CEV did to us?”

For a long time the mass media frequently have shown a one-sided perspective which presents only negative aspects of another country. The CCAP offers an opportunity to eliminate cultural bias or misunderstanding towards other countries, and at the same time to learn about those countries in a positive way. Also, through the foreigners’ perspectives on Korea, students, teachers and KIVs can acquire a balanced perspective on their own country, discarding negative perceptions or a sense of cultural superiority.

Finally, at the same time as sharing their country’s culture with Korean students, CEVs are exposed to the students’ views about Korea. Activity reports suggest that the CCAP is providing CEVs with new insights into Korean people and society, with the result that CEVs are gaining very valuable information about Korean culture that they might not otherwise have access to. There is some evidence that CEVs are developing more positive attitudes to Korean culture and lifeways through their participation in CCAP.

**Problems**

There is evidence from the activity reports that many students and teachers viewed CCAP as an opportunity to enhance their knowledge about foreign countries, or to practice their English. The major goal of CCAP, however, is to go beyond “facts” about the foreign countries, and to expose participants to the deeper values and beliefs of other cultures, thereby reaching greater mutual understanding, cross-cultural respect and tolerance for difference.

KIVs whose English is excellent are not guaranteed to be good interpreters for CCAP. Basic knowledge about the country, a well-planned pre-meeting, and an effective working relationship between KIVs and CEVs are more important elements for CCAP than fluency in English.

**Recommendations**

With the acceleration of globalisation, it becomes urgently important to keep an effective balance between global understanding and national identity. Schools clearly have an important role to play (Kniep, 1987). Within the Republic of Korea, the CCAP can be an
efficient program for cultivating global perspectives while at the same time enhancing students’ local cultural identities as Korean citizens.

To enhance the role of CCAP it is recommended that the program continue to move away from didactic approaches where the foreign volunteer gives a lecture, to a kind of forum where students and the CEV exchange their opinions and perceptions. CEVs should be encouraged to view CCAP as a cross-cultural exchange, thereby helping students to analyse their own lifeways from the outsider’s perspectives. In this way students will have a chance to think about their own culture in comparison with others, thus enabling them to discover their own cultural identity through CCAP.

The students could consolidate their cultural identity as they prepared and introduced Korean culture through performances and displays for the foreign volunteers. Class activities such as cooking traditional Korean dishes or displaying Korean traditional dancing could be very effective means of reinforcing cultural identity.

Second, it is suggested that CCAP continue to be extended to remote areas, such as Koje Island, rather than conducted exclusively in larger cities. Unlike urban cultures whose characteristics become more universal with the acceleration of globalisation, the traditional cultures of rural areas and small towns generally are maintained. Sometimes the local culture reveals an animosity towards the global, with people making little if any effort to understand it. In fact, globalisation does not mean discarding the traditional in favour of the global, but can lead to the acceptance of cultural diversity. Therefore rural areas are very suitable places for cultural exchanges. Drawing on my own experiences of CCAP in Koje Island, I suggest that the following may be effective ways to bring a more global perspective to local cultures in Korea:

(i) CEVs and the students could visit local historical sites together after a CCAP class, and explore the cultural meanings and significance of the sites.

(ii) A local cultural camp could be held for CEVs, KIVs and the students. They might stay together at a historical site for two or three days to explore local history and traditions, and to exchange their responses and feelings about the local culture.

(iii) A study group on local culture could be organised, with CEVs, KIVs, students and teachers all participating. The group might make an in-depth study of aspects of local culture and explore its significance in an age of globalisation. When CEVs have a deeper understanding of Korean culture, they are more likely to be effective when introducing their own culture to Korean students.

Third, CCAP needs to include those countries that are unknown to most Korean people, and those that Koreans have negative feelings about. Most Koreans are more knowledgeable about, and have more positive feelings towards, Western countries. On the other hand, Korean students know little about other Asian countries, and about African countries. They need to have an opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings they might have. Cultural contact through CCAP could be very effective, for example, in helping to lessen the long-lasting tensions and hatreds between Korea and Japan.

Fourth, before conducting CCAP with students, CCAP needs to be held for teachers, school administrators and parents. In order for CCAP to be fully successful in schools, teachers, parents and administrators should appreciate its importance for enhancing cross-cultural understanding.
Finally, CCAP should continue to be offered to handicapped students. Handicapped students are especially able to acquire a tolerance for difference, and to accept the universality of human dignity through participating in CCAP.

In conclusion, CCAP in the Republic of Korea has tried to conduct education for cross-cultural understanding in schools, where the future leaders are educated. We hope that the young students who participate in CCAP classes are encouraged to learn more about foreign cultures and to continue developing their understanding of cultural diversity and respect for the differences that exist among cultures.

REFERENCES


