

Multicultural Education in Australia

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1. Introduction

Korea had promoted one race-one nation as an ideology for such a long time in the past. However, the Korean government has recently changed its national slogan presumably because of the increasing numbers of migrants and foreign workers. Korea has introduced multiculturalism lately as a new national motto and tries to encompass migrants within the mainstream of the society.

Korea has been going through rapid changes not only in terms of economic growth but also of cultural and socio-political environment. Among many other aspects, demographic change and its consequences over the last decade are remarkable. The portion of foreigners

living in Korea, including migrants, has been increasing year after year. According to the statistics from the Ministry of Public Administration and Security¹⁾, total number of foreigners are over 1 million in 2009. This is 2.2 percent of the whole population. The number of foreigners and migrants is likely to increase for sometime, especially those who came to Korea as marriage migrants.

One of the main concerns regarding the new migrants and their children is that they need to adjust well in a new country, being included within the mainstream of the society. They should not be discriminated and be acknowledged as fine members of the society. In order for them to fully function in ordinary life of Korea, contributing to the community where they belong to, they need to be well prepared. Formal and informal education is critical for them to grow as an ideal member of the Korean society.

One of the great tasks for the Korean Government in dealing with the new social phenomena is to develop a unique model of multiculturalism. The Korean model of multiculturalism has to be implemented in all aspects of the society, particularly in education system. Education is essential for all members of the society but particularly for those who will be leading the country. In other words, young generation needs to learn a new vision of the country where people from different cultures live in harmony for the common goal of national benefits. Australian experiences are quite encouraging and can inspire a Korean model with the outstanding outcomes.

2. Multiculturalism in Australia

2.1. Overview

The Commonwealth of Australia was formed in 1901 through the federation of six states under a single constitution. Australia has a relatively short history but it is well known for its cultural diversity, competitive economy, functional democracy, and unique natural heritage. Among others it is also famous for its successful multiculturalism that has been promoted as the national identity for decades. In fact, Australia's population contains migrants from around 200 countries, not to mention Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Australia has a great heritage from these indigenous people and it plays a significant role in the current cultural setting of Australia.

1) <http://www.mopas.go.kr/gpms/ns/mogaha/user/nolayout/main/nationDisplay.action>

Australia is a multicultural and multi-ethnic nation and its multiculturalism is reflected in many aspects of people's life. Australia's current population is around 20 million. The biggest portion is Anglo Saxon (80 percent of the population). People from Asia and Europe constitute around 18 percent of the population. The 2 percent of the population is Aborigines. Over 200 languages are spoken with English as the common language.

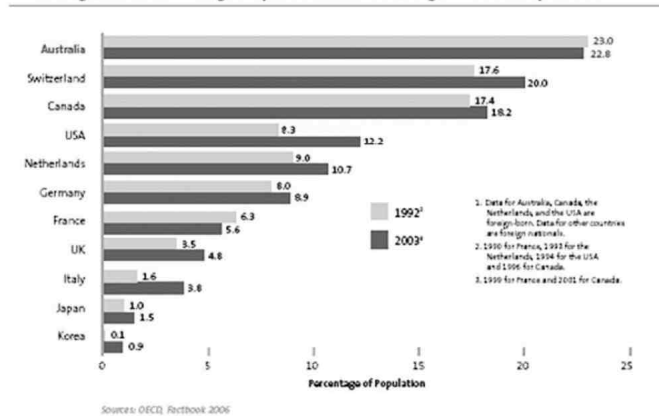
Australia has a skilled workforce and migrants constitute the major part of it. Migrants from so many countries around world have brought their language skills and other capabilities that are essential in today's global market. Many global companies have their headquarters in Australia precisely because of its bilingual and bicultural workforce.

2.2 Brief history of migration in Australia

The history of Australia is not much different from the history of immigration. From the beginning Australia has been joined by immigrants from the most diverse sources. Australian governments have maintained a reasonably high level of migrant intake stimulated by economic, cultural, and humanitarian motives.

Contemporary Australian history began in the seventeenth century although it is believed to have been inhabited by the Aboriginal people for more than 42,000 years. Except for the indigenous Australians, all the Australians are either migrants or descendants of migrants from all over the world. According to the 2001 census²⁾, 15 percent of Australians speak a language other than English at home. The chart below shows the portion of immigration and foreign population as percentage of total population in Australia (Inglis 2002).

Immigration and Foreign Population as Percentage of Total Population¹



2) See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Australia_policy

The first European settlement of Australia was in 1788 when Britain decided to use its new outpost as a penal colony and sent the First Fleet of 11 ships. They carried about 1500 people and half of them were convicts. About 160,000 men and women in all were brought to Australia as convicts from 1788 until penal transportation ended in 1868 (Inglis 2002).

Scarcity of labour, the vastness of the land and new wealth based on farming, mining and trade made Australia a land of opportunity. Yet during this period, Indigenous Australians suffered enormously. Death, illness, displacement and dispossession disrupted traditional life styles and practices. By the 1830s the number of free settlers was increasing and transportation of convicts to the Australian continent was terminated between 1852 and 1868 depending on the region.

From the 1830s small numbers of voluntary migrants from Britain and Ireland arrived in Australia. Then people from more varied backgrounds, such as different countries of continental Europe, China, the United States, New Zealand, and South Pacific started to immigrate to Australia.

When the colonies federated in 1901, migration control changed and non-white immigration was banned by the White Australia policy that had continued up until 1973. In 1975 the Australian government passed the Racial Discrimination Act, which made any racial discrimination for immigration illegal. Australian policy then began to shift towards increase of immigration from all parts of the world.

According to the ABS³⁾, about 170,000 people migrated to Australia. Approximately 45 percent of the Australian population were born outside of Australia or have at least one parent who was born overseas. Australia is sensitive to control the balance between different ethnic groups within the country. The Government keeps an eye on the impact of the recent migration on a number of aspects of population composition.⁴⁾

The migrant workforce plays a critical role in the Australian economy. The birth rate is low and the population is ageing in Australia. Therefore, Australia needs skilled and well-educated migrants. Without them the labour force would shrink in Australia.⁵⁾

2.3 Characteristics of Australian multiculturalism

In 1973, Australia declares a multicultural society for the first time. The Australian

Citizenship Act of that year announced that all migrants were to be treated equally (Walsh 2001). Since then Australia has been promoting multiculturalism as a national identity for the last four decades. According to Kerkyasharian (1988: 4), "... multiculturalism is central to, and forms the basis of, any discussion in Australia about our national identity and national future. The success of the immigration program and multicultural policies in Australia is unprecedented internationally."

Multiculturalism has been the heart of any discussion about national identity and future direction in Australia. The Australian government has strived to find a way to build unity from diversity. Consequently the Australian model of multiculturalism is evaluated as successful in the international arena. Some major reasons for the success are the egalitarianism, bipartisan support, support at the Federal Government level, and globalisation of the world.

Some indicators of the success of the Australian model of multiculturalism are presented as follows:

- (1) Multiculturalism has strengthened the social fabric and social cohesion. People felt secure in their new adopted environment, which enhanced their desire to be full members of Australian society. Therefore, they enhanced their ability to participate as full members of Australian society as quickly as possible.
- (2) Australia generally has relatively low levels of racial violence and discrimination against migrants.
- (3) The development of international trade has been enhanced by the linguistic, cultural and social connections of the migrants.
- (4) Australia is famous for its cultural richness. It has made possible the innovative 'fusion' approach to theatre, dance, cuisine, and music, which attract many tourists from all parts of the world.

These are significant outcomes of the development of multicultural Australia. Although there are still more to be done either at the state level or federal, Australia tries to affirm its commitment to multiculturalism nationally and internationally.

According to the new multicultural policy⁶⁾ launched in 2011, Australia's multicultural policy acknowledges that government services and programs must be responsive to the needs of the culturally diverse communities.

One of the most outstanding aspects of the Australian model of multiculturalism seems to

3) <http://www.abs.gov.au>

4) See the chapter at

<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/migration-in-australia/chapter-seven.pdf>

5) See discussions on the topic at The Australian Workers' Union site (<http://www.awu.net.au/>)

6) See

http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/pdf_doc/people-of-australia-multicultural-policy-booklet.pdf

be that Australia utilises its diversity as a worthless asset for national benefits. There are other countries where the same thing turned out to be a seed for social conflicts, which caused negative public reaction and violence. Multiculturalism is a living concept and is still improving and evolving in Australia.

In addition, immigration program and immigration settlement policies are functioning successfully, which contribute to the success of multiculturalism. The experience of Australia suggests that multiculturalism can be successful if the government takes a powerful step with appropriate policies and political, financial and social supports. The supports should be persistent and constant.

3. Multicultural education

Australia's education system is well-developed and participation rates in the system are ranked high in the world. School is compulsory for all children aged between five and fifteen years depending on states. They are educated to develop their full potential so that they can actively participate in a rewarding economic and social life. Australia promotes individual development through equitable and accessible education from early childhood services to skills training and higher education. The education system in Australia is open to all people. It offers an opportunity for all age groups and levels of ability.

3.1 Development of multicultural education

Schools have traditionally been considered as central agencies for implementing government social policy. Schools in Australia have been expected to play a major role in the acceptance and development of Federal Government multicultural policy under programs developed by State Education Department (Kalantzis 1995). Australian schools are generally supposed to provide equal educational opportunities for all students, irrespective of their racial and ethnic backgrounds (Office of Multicultural Affairs 1990⁷⁾).

In the immediate post-war period, migrants and their children were expected to conform as soon as they arrive to Anglo-Australian customs. They were supposed to adopt English as their language to assimilate into the mainstream Anglo-Australian way of living as well (Smolicz 1971).

During the 1960s immigrant groups began to lobby for a more tolerant attitude towards their children's mother tongues and cultures. By the 1970s, community languages and

7) <http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/multicultural>

cultures gradually became a normal part of many school programs and multiculturalism became more respectable and encouraged (NSW Department of Education Multicultural Policy Statement 1983).

When multicultural education policies announced as an official policy nationwide, perspectives had changed towards non-English speaking background students. By the late 1980s and 1990s cultural and linguistic differences had begun to move from being perceived as a problem to being perceived as a resource. Both Federal and State governments started to appreciate the human rights and equal opportunity. Moreover, they tried to link between immigration, social policy, and education on the one hand, and internationalisation and the globalisation of the economy on the other (NSW DET 1999)⁸⁾.

3.2. Scope of multicultural education

Multicultural education values and benefits from the cultural and linguistic diversity to fully realise its social, cultural and economic potential. Multicultural education policy outlines the responsibilities of schools to provide teaching and learning programs that enable students from all cultures and communities to identify as Australians within a democratic multicultural society. The policy emphasises that each student needs to develop the knowledge, skills and values for participation as active citizens. Schools ensure inclusive teaching practices which recognise the backgrounds and cultures of all students and promote a tolerant attitude towards different cultures, religions and world views.

The cultural and linguistic diversity of Australia is reflected in its schools, colleges and other education and training institutions. A key element of effective multiculturalism in schools is anti-racist attitude development through intercultural understanding. Multicultural and anti-racist programs and resources are provided by governments to schools to assist in ensuring that all students and staff can learn and work in an environment characterised by positive attitudes and intercultural understanding (McInerney 2003).

Although there are some regional differences in terms of implementation of multiculturalism in the context of education the followings are the defined scopes of multicultural education at the national level:

- (1) Provision of specialist teaching programs of English as a second language for immigrants and indigenous children and adults

8) NSW DET <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/home/>

- (2) First language maintenance for immigrant and indigenous learners
- (3) Teaching of community languages, i.e. immigrant and indigenous languages, as second languages
- (4) Infusing culturally diverse perspectives across all subject areas of the curriculum, such as history, geography, citizenship studies
- (5) Parent participation
- (6) Active combating of negative and racist depictions of minority populations (Lo Bianco 2010)

From (1) to (3) can be grouped under language policy and they show the significance of language issues in education. Since the adoption of multicultural education in Australia there has been a continuing interest in language and culture policies. In general, while multicultural policy has been and continues to attract public criticism very few people challenge the study of languages. The expansion of language education and its diversification has been one of the great success stories of Australian language policy since the multiculturalism was adopted (Lo Bianco 2010). In fact, teaching and learning other languages than English has brought great respect towards other languages and cultures to monolingual Australians. Attitudes towards migrants have changed thanks to the realisation of richness of other languages and cultures.

According to Lo Bianco(2010)'s analysis of multicultural education, Australia was one of the world leaders in innovative educational responses to diversity from immigrant sources, and that some of these innovations remain strong and present in contemporary education. Australia's experience of multicultural education include programs of pedagogical and curriculum innovation. This aspect will be exemplified in the next section

3.3 Teaching resources, method, curriculum

In order to achieve the given scopes of multicultural education, different programs and services are provided for the practical purposes. For instance, in all states there are Anti-Racism education, English as a Second language (ESL) education, and Refugee support programs are available. Moreover, services, such as Cultural understanding and community relations, Community capacity building, and Interpreting and translations are offered. They are either for the school staffs, volunteers or students and their parents from different cultural backgrounds. All these programs and services are critical to build a school and its community

without any discrimination in which students and their parents, even those who came as refugees, can develop full potential and capacity.

The details of each one cannot be presented here due to space restriction (see NSW Public Schools⁹⁾ site for details) but to give an idea about how Australian schools try to encompass students from other cultures I will exemplify only a couple of events. Firstly, some schools invite the parents of a new student who just arrived to the local community from their own. In order to help other students in the same class to understand the new member, teachers ask his/her parents to show their costumes, pictures of their country, and even traditional dishes. Then the teacher let the class explore the home country of the new migrant student investigating the national flag, symbols, landscape, industrial characteristics, and so on in some consecutive classes, which means it can take few hours. Consequently the whole class get a good understanding of the new member.

Secondly, some schools organise cosmopolitan festivals where students from other cultures can participate with their own traditional cloths, and activities such as dance and games. These are all organised to teach young students to learn other cultures and to respect them.

A wealth of downloadable materials and resources on multiculturalism are available online mainly for educators. For instance, there are research papers, reports, lesson ideas, audio materials, newspaper articles, interviews, speeches, and discussion topics are suggested online.¹⁰⁾ Furthermore, activity ideas, quizzes, and even sample lessons are on hand so that teachers can be inspired to create their own teaching plans for multicultural education. These days teachers try to bring digital teaching mode in their classrooms. The following is some examples of teaching resources:

The NSW Reconciliation Council site¹¹⁾ provides a wealth of information and resources regarding reconciliation between white and indigenous Australians. For example, history of settlement, background information to understand the need for reconciliation, news and events regarding reconciliation happening around Australia, campaigns and projects about reconciliation, and video clips are accessible.

The Aboriginal history site¹²⁾ offers information on stories of Aborigines, biographies, and autobiographies of indigenous Australians. The Multicultural, Cross-cultural & Intercultural

9) <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/yrk12focusareas/multiculted/index.php>

10) see Making multicultural Australia: <http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/>

11) <http://www.nswreconciliation.org.au/home>

12) <http://www.aboriginalhistory.org/>

Games and Activities site¹³⁾ focuses on games and activities to understand cultural differences and culturally-bound properties of a person including intelligence. Some schools¹⁴⁾ even have their own sites that offer resources for main subjects, teachers' tips for students, and various links including multicultural issues for all levels from year 1 to year 7.

An educational portal site¹⁵⁾ also provides a wide range of information including curriculum samples, useful links for education and resources such as education softwares. Multiculturalism is implemented in all aspects of education.

Not only in-class learning but out-door activities aiming multicultural learning experiences are available at different sites. For instance, The AustraLearn site¹⁶⁾ gives a plenty of ideas on out-door learning activities, including a unique Bridging Cultures Program.

Teaching method is varied from in-class lecture, discussion, activity such as game, quizzee, on-line learning. Educators utilise all sources of teaching modes especially experiencing Australian history and culture. Exploring cuisines and musics of other cultural groups, heritage sites of Aborigines. Camping and excursion play an important part of education.

All the sites mentioned above aim to help educators and students to acquire a better understanding with respect to multiculturalism in Australia, in particular, the history of multiculturalism and immigration, stories of indigenous people, development of multicultural policies. Implementation of multiculturalism in formal education is a big part of these sites.

Lately the Australian government puts a lot of effort in supporting Aboriginal people and their culture as Australian heritage. Social, political and financial supports are available for the purpose of maintaining indigenous languages and cultures. For instance, the Australian Museum site¹⁷⁾ offers various resources regarding Australian indigenous culture.

Multicultural education applies to the tertiary level as well. A number of universities offer courses for cross-cultural communication and intercultural communication. Multicultural training is included in education degrees and teacher training.

4. Adult education and training

Multicultural education has been developed mainly for adult migrants. Each state provides various programs and services for migrants including refugees and asylum seekers. One of

the important skills for living and adjusting in Australia is language skill. All migrants are entitled for a certain amount of hours as well as Child care service while they are doing the course called Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP hence forth). This program is provided by the Australian Government to assist all migrants as soon as they arrive in Australia so that they can settle and function in the new country. Migrants can learn English either to get a job or for a further study. The educators in the AMEP program are trained to deal with migrants from diverse cultural backgrounds. Cross-cultural and intercultural communication skills are now included in teacher training.

Apart from English program, there are other services for adult migrants. For instance, there are settlement programs, such as Settlement Grant Program, Humanitarian Settlement Services, and Complex Case Support Services¹⁸⁾. All these are offered specifically for those who came to Australia as humanitarian entrants. Most of them had lived in a pretty bad environment already in their home country and need practical supports in the new country.

Newly arrived migrants have limited language fluency and need services for translation and interpretation. This service is particularly important when they need to see a doctor or the teacher of their children. The service can minimise stress and pressure caused by their restricted language skills. The Australian Government offer the multilingual services¹⁹⁾. Moreover, newly arrived migrants can call in their own language when they need to call Centrelink²⁰⁾ that provides a wide range of services including unemployment allowance, pension, and job seeking.

While new comers try to adjust in the new country the government induces public to accept these new Australians either at the national or the state level. For instance, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship offers the program called Diversity and Social Cohesion²¹⁾. The main purpose of the program is to help all communities to understand benefits of multiculturalism and having migrants. The program promotes the importance of mutual understanding and respect, fair treatment of all Australians, and equal opportunities for people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This program is supposed to help the communities to build the full capacity.

There are also a number of community centres in each community where migrants can learn language and culture. Many migrants choose to work as a volunteer to contribute to the

13) <http://wilderdom.com/games/MulticulturalExperientialActivities.html>

14) http://beenleigss.eq.edu.au/wcms/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1

15) <http://www.aussieeducator.org.au/index.html>

16) <http://www.australeam.org>

17) <http://australianmuseum.net.au>

18) <http://www.service.tas.gov.au/browse/Migrants/Migrant+and+multicultural+services/>

19) <http://australia.gov.au/>

20) <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/Centrelink/centrelink-online-services>

21) <http://www.hamony.gov.au/dscp/>

local community while they are in the course of adjusting.

In addition, many ethnic communities run weekend language schools where their children can either learn or maintain their mother tongues. The Ethnic Schools Associations are available either at the state or federal level²²⁾.

In sum, all Australians, either a new comer or an Australian born citizen, can learn how to live in the multicultural Australian society. The Government has been putting lots of effort into establishing multicultural policies and implementing them into all aspects of life, in particular, in education system. The main successes are encouragement of language education at schools and of involving new migrants in the communities in many aspects of community life, including volunteering. The Government has successfully proved that skilled migrants bring benefits to the nation.

Mutual understanding is critical between existing mainstream Australians, indigenous Australians, and newly migrated Australians. Through trials and errors the Government realised that putting effort should come from both sides not only from the migrant side. This means that Australians need to learn to live with new migrant in harmony being tolerant with their cultures and customs. The change of the perspective has brought a significant impact on all Australians. People started to realise the benefits of having migrant and to appreciate their skills and knowledge. The last four decades have witnessed evolution of multiculturalism in Australia and now its success is being benchmarked by many countries.

5. Implications for the Korean model of multicultural education

Korea is now facing a new era of multiculturalism. Developing a Korean model of multiculturalism and multicultural education is critical for its present and future. Although multiculturalism in Korea is at a primary level the government has been seeking various ways of improving it. The Australian model of multiculturalism is one of the most successful ones in the world. Korea can be inspired by this model to build a Korean specific model.

Among various aspects of the Australian model of multiculturalism there are some features that can give some implications for the Korean model of multiculturalism and multicultural education. They are summarised as follows:

- (1) Multiculturalism is a reality in Korea and this has to be shared by all members of the Korean society. People should learn that Korea needs migrants to maintain the nation

²²⁾ see for example the following site: <http://www.communitylanguages.org.au>

and its system including its economy.

- (2) Korea needs to define similarities and differences of multicultural phenomena between Korea and other mature multicultural societies. Analysing the characteristics of multicultural phenomena unique to the Korean society is critical to establish a Korean model of multiculturalism.
- (3) Korea needs to establish a number of good and practical multicultural policies. This has to be done in the committee where a number of experts in various fields, such as politics, sociology, economy, demography, linguistics, culture study, and education etc. The task is multidisciplinary and it cannot be properly done without expertise in all aspects of the society.
- (4) Curricular design at all levels of education system have to be reviewed and reconstructed along the same lines with the new policies of multiculturalism in Korea. Funds for investigations and research for this purpose is essential. This means that degrees in education and other fields need to be reviewed as well. Training and courses for teachers and future teachers are important for the proper education for young students.
- (5) The government should convince Korean people to acknowledge the need for migrants principally for workforce and reproduction. Korean people, not only decision makers but also all ordinary people, need to be aware of the importance of supporting multicultural programs and services for migrants and their children. New migrants need all sorts of support apart from language programs as seen in the Australian case. Recently translating service has started for the marriage migrant mothers so that they can understand the messages from their children's schools. However, supports are quite limited and they need to be expanded and reached to all those who are in need.
- (6) Korean people need to learn living with migrants and their cultures. The tolerance to differences should be taught explicitly at all levels of students having classroom activities and teaching programs. For instance, Korean students should be able to learn other languages than Korean and English. Experience of learning another language may

bring deeper understanding towards migrants and their children. This is critical experience for deepening mutual understanding and respect.

(7) The Korean Government should find various ways to utilise migrants' qualifications and their capacities including language skills and cultural knowledge. Migrants eventually become bilingual and bicultural, which means that they have potential for working in the global market. Not many migrants are benefited by their language skills and cultural knowledge at present. There are no opportunities for marriage migrants from different countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Phillipines, and China, to use their language skills. They feel reluctant to teach their mother tongue to their children. Not many of them have good qualifications. Therefore well-prepared courses for those who have low education level are needed. These courses can maximise their capabilities and bring benefits to the nation eventually. Many traders and business people need qualified employees who know both Korean and their trading partners in such countries.

(8) Korea need to establish its own multiculturalism that should be implemented in education system. Experts in academia and administration should collaborate for this purpose. Multicultural education at different levels from primary to tertiary has to be well planned and designed. A systematic curriculum design should be a main part of the plan for multicultural education. Courses for educators, in particular, teachers who face a number of students from mixed-marriage couples, should be offered. Students in formal education system should all learn multiculturalism in Korea and different ways to utilise this reality.

(9) In the meantime multiculturalism has to be promoted nationwide to convince and persuade public in Korea. People need to share the needs and benefits of multiculturalism and learn the consequences of racial discrimination. Changes of beliefs and cultural values are generally quite slow. Therefore, effort into promoting the Korean model of multiculturalism should continue for several decades and the commitment of the Government is critical.

Establishing a Korean model of multiculturalism and implementing it in the Korean

education system is not an easy task. However, the government has taken the initiative already and further steps should be taken for a while. Strategic plans for implementation of multiculturalism in education have to be found and instituted without hasty decisions.

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