Summary of the Teaching of Philosophy in the Republic of Korea

Philosophy in the National goals of Education

The general goals of education in the Republic of Korea is ‘to help all people perfect their individual characters, develop the self-sustaining ability to attain independent lives, acquire the qualifications of independent citizens, participate in the makings of an independent state, and promote the prosperity of all human kind.’ The main philosophy related goals are

- Autonomous individuals
- Creativity
- Knowledge and skills
- National culture
- Participatory democracy
- Morally sound Korean citizens

Primary education

The general goals of primary education are ‘to cultivate healthy, self-reliant, creative, and morally sound Korean individuals who will be leaders in the twenty-first century.’

Philosophy related goals in primary education are

- Variety of experiences for a balanced development of body and mind
- Autonomous individuals
- Morally sound Korean individuals
- Recognize and solve problems

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4 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
• Express feelings and ideas
• Right attitude for understanding and appreciating Korea’s tradition and culture
• Love of fellow citizens and country

Philosophy is taught as part of Moral Education in primary school.

The weekly time allocation for courses that can include philosophy related goals is presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1*</th>
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</table>

*Grade 1 consists of 30 weeks while the other grades consist of 34 weeks.

Assessment
Not available at this moment.

Case studies of philosophy teaching in primary schools: Identified courses called “philosophy” in schools
Not available at this moment.

Case studies of philosophy teaching in primary schools: Philosophy related teaching in schools
Not available at this moment.

Secondary education
Secondary education is divided into middle school (year 7-9) and high school (year 10-12). The general goals for secondary education are for students to ‘acquire basic abilities essential for learning and

"Traditional education in Korea consists mostly in teaching by way of indoctrinating Confucian philosophy. Since the introduction of a modern secular educational system, namely general education for all the free citizens in Korea, Confucian ideology and its forms of political authoritarianism lost their power and yet hardly died out. Philosophy educators must be keenly aware of and critically teach the pitfalls of traditional political ideologies embedded in Confucianism and try to re-awaken the democratic spirit of Buddhism.”

Jae-ryong Shim in *Buddhism, Democracy, and Philosophy Education: The Korean Case*

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everyday living, and to help students become democratic citizens’. Philosophy related goals in lower secondary education are

- To promote well-balanced development of both mind and body and to provide students with the opportunity to discover their own potentials
- To help students cultivate the basic and problem-solving abilities necessary for learning and everyday living and to equip them with the ability to creatively express their thoughts and feelings
- To cultivate an understanding of the basic values and principles of free democracy and a democratic lifestyle.

Philosophy related goals in upper secondary education are

- To help students develop a well-harmonized character along with a sound body and mind and a mature sense of self-identity
- To help students develop logical, critical, and creative thinking abilities necessary for the further pursuit of academics and for everyday living
- To help students strive to build a national community and develop the awareness and attitude of global.

Year 11 and 12 include a large set of electives. For example, the basic subject Citizen’s ethics can be complemented by the electives Ethics and ideas or Traditional ethics.

<table>
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<th>Subject</th>
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</table>

The weekly time allocation is based on an academic year that consists of 34 weeks.

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10 http://www.ibe.unesco.org/
11 http://www.ibe.unesco.org/
Assessment
Since 1996 teachers have to document each student’s comprehensive personal record. National examinations take place during upper elementary, lower and upper secondary education. A free-response and multiple choice format is used.

Case studies of philosophy teaching in secondary schools: Identified courses called “philosophy” in schools
Not available at this moment.

Identified programmes to provide teaching materials in philosophy
The Korean Academy for Teaching Philosophy in Seoul (KATPIS) is involved in various fields regarding the teaching of philosophy. Its goals are:
- Collecting and introducing the examples of 'teaching philosophy' abroad
- Research for the implementation of our own model of ‘teaching philosophy’ into the curriculum
- Giving teacher in-service education and training teacher-educators
- Holding seminars for those interested in ‘teaching philosophy’
- Communicating and cooperating with the institutes and research groups abroad
- Evaluating and providing feedback based on the results of performing ‘teaching philosophy’ programmes

Electronic resources

13 http://www.cein.go.kr/
14 http://www.koreanp4c.org/english/introducing_02.htm

Moral education in the Republic of Korea

Ethics textbooks are prepared under the supervision of the national authority. Moral education is taught from the third year of primary school through to the first year of secondary school. Students have a choice between three courses: Civics, Ethics and Thought, and Traditional Ethics. We are at pains to take an integrated approach so that knowledge and the emotional understanding of morality lead to practical action. The content of moral education is divided into four life areas: i) personal life, ii) family, neighbourhood and school life, iii) social life, and iv) national life.
Five values and fundamental moral virtues are chosen for each of these divisions. For personal life, these values are: respect for human life, diligence, honesty, independence and self-control. The values to seek in one’s relations with family, neighbours, and school are: respectful behaviour, taking care of family members, etiquette and courtesy, cooperation, and love for one’s school and hometown. In their social life, students must learn the values of: respect for the law, consideration for others, protection of the environment, justice, and community feeling. Life within a nation requires: patriotism, fraternal love for one’s people, awareness of security, efforts for peaceful unification, and love of humanity.
Each unit in the manual of moral education covers several discussion points touching on contemporary moral issues. This is so that the students can deepen their thinking and share ideas about controversial moral issues. The subject of civics in particular is developed principally to help students foster their ability to make judgments. In encouraging role-plays and discussions in the classroom, we help them to develop moral values on their own.

Suk-won Song,
Researcher in Higher Education Curriculum Policy Division
Ministry of Education (Republic of Korea)
Translated versions of P4C material including a translation by Dr. Yoochoel Kim version of The Boy and the Tramp by Per Jesperson are available online.

Critical and analytical thinking resources in Korean by the Critical Thinking Community.

**Links**


http://www.cein.go.kr/
http://www.childrenphilosophy.com/korea1.htm
http://www.ibe.unesco.org/
http://www.kice.re.kr/en/resources/curriculum02.jsp
http://www.koreap4c.org/english/index.htm?PHPSESSID=ae57a158da0aa1fc9ef97771176511e

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