

University-level English Curriculum for High School Students in Korea

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Abstract

The study aims to suggest the directions to develop standard curriculum for University-level Program (UP) for high school students in English of Korea. UP program is a curriculum of Korea sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Technology which offers standardized courses to high school students that are generally recognized to be equivalent to undergraduate courses in college. Participating colleges grant credit to students who obtained high enough scores on the exams to qualify. This study reviewed the data on line on the English and second language French curricula of Advanced Placement (AP) of the United States, International Baccalaureate (IB) of Europe, and General Certificate of Education (GCE)-A Level of the Great Britain and analyzed the English courses of the current English curricular of high schools and colleges of Korea. The results showed that the courses of AP English Language & Composition, English 2 of IB have similarities with those of high school and college of Korea in the aspect that writing is central. GCE-A Level French Language is similar with the courses of high school and college of Korea in the aspect that it is focusing on 4 skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) development. The various topics like social issues, culture, mass media, etc for the course are considered more suitable for the Korean UP program rather than those of specific literary themes related with drama, poem, novel, etc.

Keywords

University-level Program, AP, IB, GCE A-level

Introduction

Korean Ministry of Education and Technology strives to provide primary and secondary school students with courses adjusted to their English proficiency levels in order to improve their English proficiency. However, the programs for the high level students in English proficiency have not been provided yet. According to these needs of the programs, the Ministry of Education and Technology had Korean Council for University Education run up programs on subjects of math,

chemistry, biology, physics, environmental science & writing for academically well prepared high school students (Korean Council for University Education, 2010). Later on, in the year 2011, Korean Council for University Education is trying to provide university level high school students with an English program.

UP is a rigorous academic pre-university high school program. It is required to provide descriptions of typical introductory college courses and to assess equivalent achievement in them so that academically prepared and motivated students can complete meaningful elements of college-level studies. In English, the task of describing the representative introductory course and of assessing students' achievements in comparable high school courses is a complex one, for curricula and instruction vary widely across the discipline. The greatest challenge is finding an appropriate balance between describing and prescribing either curriculum format and content or instructional approaches.

Therefore, this study tries to provide English curriculum suitable for high school students with high English proficiency, connecting high school curricula and those of college. Accordingly, this study is focused on connecting curriculum of high school English with that of college freshman English, and standardizing Korean UP into international UP programs. For this, AP of USA, IB of Europe, GCE-A level of the Great Britain of England were searched online and literature review of Korean high school & College English curricula (Jan-Feb 2011) were made.

1 Literature Review

1.1 AP

AP provides willingly and academically prepared high school students with the opportunity to study and learn at the college level. More than 90 percent of four-year colleges and universities in the United States grant students credit on the basis of successful AP Exam scores.

Many American colleges begin with a course in

expository writing for a year, a semester or a shorter period, followed by a course in introductory readings in literature. Subsequently, students may take advanced courses in language, rhetoric and expository writing or in literature (2010 the College Board: www.collegeboard.com). The AP English Development Committees offer parallel exams: one in Language and Composition and one in Literature and Composition.

1.1.1 AP English Language and Composition

The goals of an AP English Language and composition course are diverse because the college composition course is one of the most varied in the curriculum. Most composition courses emphasize the expository, analytical and argumentative writing that forms the basis of writing that fosters the development of writing facility in any context. Composition courses teach students to read primary and secondary sources carefully, to synthesize material from these texts in their own compositions. Another possibility is to organize a course around sequences of assignments devoted to writing in particular forms (argumentative, narrative, expository) or to group reading and writing assignments by form, theme, or voice, asking students to identify writers' strategies and then practice them themselves. Still another alternative is to use genre as an organizing principle for a course, studying how the novel, compared to the autobiography, offers different possibilities for writers, and how classical debate or argument influences us in ways that are not the same as those used in consensus building.

1.1.2 AP English Literature and Composition

Students choosing AP English Literature and Composition study literature of various periods and genres. Teachers of courses in AP English can complement the efforts of their students by guiding them in their choice of reading, by leading discussions, and by providing assignments that help students develop critical standards in their reading and writing.

Because colleges offer many different introductory English courses, it is difficult to describe generally how the two AP English Exams relate to those courses. The most common beginning course in English is one in composition. Students read a variety of texts and are taught basic elements of rhetoric: writing with a purpose, addressing and appealing to an audience, creating effective text structures, and effecting an appropriate style. Another common introductory sequence of courses is a one-semester course in composition followed by another semester course that offers additional instruction in argumentation and teaches the skills of synthesizing, summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting and citing secondary source material.

1.1.3 AP French

AP English and Composition and AP English and Literature are the courses for English native students in general. Accordingly, AP French courses need to be looked into, since English is a foreign language for Korean students, just like French is a foreign language for American students. AP French provides frequent opportunities for students to integrate the four language skills through the use of authentic materials. The course provides instruction and frequent opportunities to write a variety of compositions in French. Instructional materials include authentic written texts that develop students' reading abilities. The course provides students with regular opportunities to develop their speaking skills in a variety of settings, types of discourse, and topics.

1.2 IB

IB is a rigorous pre-university course of studies, leading to examinations that meet the needs of highly motivated secondary school students between the ages of 16 and 19 years. Designed as a comprehensive two-year curriculum that allows its graduates to fulfill requirements of various national education systems, the Diploma Program model is based on the pattern of no single country but incorporates the best elements of many.

The Diploma Program is available in English, French and Spanish. All diploma students must complete the core program, and they must study 6 academic subjects. The group 1 language is a literature course in the student's mother tongue or best language. Group 2 is a second or foreign language program that can be taken at beginner's platform (*ab initio*), intermediated platform (B), or fluent platform (A2, offered to bilingual students). Both group 1 and 2 languages can be taken at either Higher Level (HL) or Standard Level (SL). Group 3 is history, group 4 experimental sciences, group 5, mathematics and computer science, and group 6, the arts and free electives programs.

Group 2, a foreign language program consists of a broad spectrum of modern language courses and two classical languages: Latin and Classical Greek. The aim of group 2 is to enable students to understand and use the language they have studied in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes and enable students to use the language appropriately. In the language A2 course, students are exposed to a wide range of texts in the target language, for example, short stories, speeches, cartoons, advertisement and news reports. They learn how to compare and contrast how the target language is used in different texts, and how language and style affect the presentation of theme and topic. Once they have become familiar with the style and language used in different types of texts,

students are required to write tasks that related to the course content, in an appropriate register and style.

The IB diploma subjects are examined by a combination of continuous coursework and examinations at the end of the two-year program. IB consists of 2 assessment; external (70%) and internal (30%). In the external assessment, candidates complete two written tasks. One is based on a literary option, the other on a cultural option. In the cultural options are language and culture, media and culture, future issues, global issues and social issues. In the literary options students consider how writers use language and style to present ideas, themes, feelings and attitudes. In the internal assessment, two oral activities are internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IBO. The method of assessment is criterion-referenced, not norm-referenced.

1.3 GCE-A level & GCE French

1.3.1 GCE-A level

The Advanced Level General Certificate of Education, commonly referred to as an A-level, is a qualification offered by education institutions in England, Northern Ireland, Wales, Cameroon, and the Cayman Islands (<http://www.wikipedia.org>). It is also offered in Scotland by a small number of educational institutions, typically private fee-paying schools, where students would normally take the Scottish Qualifications Certificate Higher and Advanced Higher.

A-levels are studied over a two year period and are widely recognized around the world, as well as being the standard entry qualification for assessing the suitability of applicants for academic courses in English, Welsh and Northern Irish universities (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GCE_Advanced_Level).

1.3.2 GCE French Language

GCE French Language, a foreign language in England can be summarized as follows, compared with GCE-A level (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison between GCE A Level and GCE French Language

	GCE-A level	GCE Modern French Language
Nature	Developing writing skills	Developing communicative competency in various circumstances
Aims	to help students enjoy English literature through reading to encourage them to think critically, and to form their own impressions and conclusions about a text	to encourage candidates to develop the knowledge and skills acquired at GCSE level and use the language learned in a wide range of context.
Contents	Literary works	Environments, culture, social issue
Assessment	Writing	Reading, listening, speaking, writing

In sum, GCE French courses show similarity with AP French Language, in the aspect that the goal of GCE French is improving communicative competence.

2 Korean English Curriculum

2.1 High School English Curriculum

The UP should be connected with high school and college English courses. Accordingly, the highest level high school English courses need to be examined. The high school English courses have been revised several times by the Ministry of Education and Technology, and the recent revised curriculum of Korean high school is like followings (Table 2).

Table 2: High School English Courses Revised in 2007 by Ministry of Education and Technology

High School English Curriculum		
General High School	Specialized High School	
	Foreign High School	International
-English -English I -Practical English -Conversation -Advanced English -Conversation	-English -Conversation I -English -Conversation II -English -Listening -Advanced	-English -Reading

-English Reading & Composition -Advanced English Reading & Composition	English -English Reading -English Composition - English Culture I -English Culture II -English Grammar	
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English Composition can be considered as the course for the high level students in high schools.

2.2 University English Curriculum

2.2.1 English Major Courses

English Major Courses for colleges have composition like high school (Table 3).

Table 3. English Major Courses

English language	English literature
<input type="checkbox"/> Major Basics: -English Language Introduction -English Writing I, II <input type="checkbox"/> General courses: -English Language Overview, -History of English Language <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced courses: -English Phonetics, -English Grammar, -English Structure, -Conversation Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Major Search Courses: -English Literature, Introduction, -English Writing I, II <input type="checkbox"/> General courses: -English Literature Overview, -American Literature Overview <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Courses: Poem, Novel, etc.

2.2.2 General English Courses

English Courses for freshmen could be divided into two groups, general English and English for specific purposes according to the contents. (1) General English courses are focusing on developing English communicative competence. The courses searched on line (16 universities): were as follows: English conversation, Easy listening, Composition, English communication, Advanced English discussion, Advanced English presentation, Advanced English: Current issue discussion, etc. (2) English for specific purposes are: TOEIC, Business English, Travel English, Legal English, Practical English, global English communication strategy, Basic research and presentation in English, etc.

3 Results & Discussion

Because colleges offer many different introductory English courses, it is difficult to describe them in

general. However, typical introductory college course are composition courses. The following shows the features of the AP English, IB and GEC-A Level, and the programs of AP French, IB second language and GCE French (Table 4, Table 5).

Table 4 AP, IB, GCE-A Level Features

	AP	IB	A Level
C	(1) English Literature & Composition (2) English Language & Composition	(1)English A1 (Native English) (2)English A2 (Second Language)	English Literature
C	(1) Literature (2) Various topics	(1)Literature (2)Various topics	(1)Contents
A	(1)Reading, Composition (2)Reading, Composition	(1)Composition (2) Composition (70%), Speaking (30%)	(2)Composition

C: Course, C: Contents, A: Assessment

Table 5 AP French, IB second language, GCE French Features

	AP French	IB second language	GCE-a level Modern French Language
Aim	Communication in the various situation	Writing ability on non-literary topics	Communication in the various situation
Assessment	Speaking, listening Reading Writing	Composition	Speaking Listening Reading Writing

4 Conclusion

This study aims to suggest the directions to develop standard curriculum for UP in English of Korea. English Composition is suggested for the UP in English of Korea. The various topics like social issues, culture, mass media, etc for the course are considered more suitable for the Korean UP program rather than those of specific literary themes related with drama, poem, novel, etc.

5 References

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