

English language epidemic in Korea

Currency

		1xUS\$ =currency*
Argentinean	Pesos	3.745
Australian	Dollar	1.840
Brazilian	Real	3.655
British	Pound	0.638
Bulgarian	Leva	1.979
Canadian	Dollar	1.586
Chilean	Pesos	744.87
Chinese (PR)	Yuan	8.281
Czech	Koruny	30.85
Danish	Kroner	7.546
Egyptian	Pound	4.645
EU	Euro	1.016
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.799
Hungarian	Forint	247.28
Icelandic	Kronur	86.291
Indonesian	Rupiah	9008.1
Israeli	New Shekels	4.838
Japanese	Yen	123.04
Maltese	Lira	0.429
Mexican	Peso	10.115
New Zealand	Dollar	2.113
Norwegian	Kroner	7.423
Polish	Zloty	4.145
Russian	Rubles	31.710
Singaporean	Dollar	1.787
Slovakian	Koruny	42.708
South African	Rand	10.438
South Korean	Won	1226.8
Swedish	Krona	9.227
Swiss	Franc	1.482
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	34.888
Thai	Baht	43.509
Turkish	Lira	1,638,100.0
Venezuelan	Bolivar	1,472.9

*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 02/10/02

ETS launches English test for business in China

THE Educational Testing Service (ETS), which delivers the Toefl exam, is developing an English language exam specifically for business interests in China. Together with Beijing Topeak International Education Investment, ETS will develop a testing system that is based on a global standard, but also appropriate for Chinese businesses.

Wu Yongke, at China's State Economic and Trade Commission, said he hoped the test would encourage professionals to improve their English ability. Kurt Landgraf, Chief Executive of ETS, added, 'The Chinese government has challenged key industry managers and workers to become proficient in English.' □

The popularity of English language learning in Korea is rampant, as statistics show that more and more Korean nationals are choosing to study abroad. A recent report in the *Korea Times* revealed that 203,000 children under the age of 15 travelled abroad for study between July and September last year. The Bank of Korea reported a deficit in the travel balance in July this year of US\$409 million - an all-time high.

The desire to acquire English language skills seems to be increasingly strong. In September, an English language cable TV channel was launched in Korea, which broadcasts for 18 hours a day and offers programmes relating to studying English, such as business English, Toefl and Toefl exams, and how to prepare for university entrance exams.

In an online survey conducted by Joblink, an Internet-based employment market analyst in Korea, English language skills were reported to be the most significant challenge when it came to getting a job, according to 1,170 job seekers interviewed. Forty per cent regarded English language ability as their main hurdle to gaining a job and 54 per cent said they spent most of their time improving their English fluency.

In the Korean press, a new name has also been given to fathers who remain at home alone, while their children study overseas with mothers accompanying them. 'Wild goose daddies' is the translation of the term, which describes a growing number of fathers living in office/hotels (called officetels) in Korea while their families are abroad, normally in English-speaking countries such as the USA or UK.

The associated 'wild goose industry', such as laundry services and housemaid jobs in officetels, is reported to be booming. An article in the *Korea Times* states, 'This phenomenon is the product of a distorted public education system and Korean parents' zeal for their children's education, with the boom to learn English making it even worse.'

Agents in the country agree that enthusiasm for study abroad at all ages is high. Joe H Chang, of New Ivy Overseas Education Center in Korea, said that mothers often accompanied their children abroad, 'usually for a year or six months'. He added, 'In some areas of Seoul, mothers get together and send their children as a group and each mother [stays with] the group for a two or three month period.'

Jay H Yang, at Lucky Education Centre, added, 'There are so many students who want to go overseas with their mother - usually to Australia or the USA'.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there have been calls in the press to dampen demand for English language education overseas by making it available in Korea itself. This coincides with the Korean government's aims to attract more international students into the country's higher education system (see *Language Travel Magazine*, November 2002, page 24). Pro-

fessor Kang Hee-joon, of Indiana University Kelley School of Business in the USA, writing in the *Korea Times*, said, 'Instead of sending away thousands of kids, Korea can bring a part of America into Korea. Rather than letting so many young children go abroad, why not invite in English instructors from abroad?'

Kang advocates using university facilities and dormitories to establish summer schools, under a government directive. He points out that it will be costly to pay for native English teachers, counselors, room and board, but the overall cost would be less expensive for the student customers.

'Moreover, [students] will all spend money within Korea [and] teachers will also spend some of their earnings in Korea,' he pointed out. 'Soon, higher education markets will be open for foreign competition in Korea. A facility for good English training in Korea will enhance international competitiveness.' □

MEI~Relsa website gets a facelift

THE English language teaching association in Ireland, MEI~Relsa, has overhauled its website to make it more user-friendly, with a searchable database of schools listed by region and course type. Launched in August, the website also contains an agents' area, which allows agents to sign up to the MEI~Relsa mailing list and make contact with the association.

Gillian Nother, Manager of the association, said that information on courses and start dates is now frequently updated. 'Members think the new site is fantastic and user-friendly,' she added.

Nother also reported a good turnout for the MEI workshop, which was held in September. Seventy-two agents from 19 countries attended, with 91 per cent taking part in the fam trips that followed the one-day workshop. Thirty Irish schools



The site now has agent services

participated at the event. 'This was the second consecutive year that the workshop was held in the beautiful mediaeval surroundings of Dromoland Castle in the Shannon region,' said Nother. 'The banquet on the Sunday evening set a relaxed and friendly atmosphere for the few days ahead.'

Agent Berth Olofsson, from Language Partner in Sweden, who attended the workshop, said, 'I will certainly recommend my colleagues around the world to participate... the workshop was well organised and exciting.' □

Acquisitions and mergers in the marketplace

THERE have been a number of acquisitions and mergers in the industry. The European Centre of English Language Studies (Ecels) in Malta has acquired the established Brighton-based UK language school, House of English. The buy-out means that the EC Group, which owns Ecels, is moving into the UK market for the first time.

Andrew Mangion, Chief Executive of the EC Group, said, 'Our agent feedback showed very positive support for a new EC centre in the UK. Over 75 per cent of our existing partners stated that they would seriously consider working with the EC in the UK.' Mangion added that the EC Group decided on Brighton because 'a coastal city with a fresh and vibrant atmosphere, fast access to London and value for money fits the EC model'. The Brighton school will operate under a joint EC/House of English brand until January 2004.

Elsewhere, Tamwood International College in Vancouver, Canada, has taken over the operations of Whistler Language Institute in Whistler, also in British Columbia. 'This takeover is very exciting for our clients and for Tamwood,' said Matt Collingwood, President of Tamwood. 'We will now be expanding our offering of the popular English courses for adults in Whistler to a year round basis.'

In Mexico, Spanish language school chain, Don Quijote, is opening a new branch to add to its existing schools in mainland Spain, Tenerife and Peru. Opening in March 2003, the school will be located in the central university city of Guanajato. David Stratten, Manager of Don Quijote UK, said, 'Our expansion into Mexico is opening up a new destination for the discerning traveller.'

And in October, the UK summer centres operated by the company International House Rickmansworth-Elco merged

with the Wels group, which operates the International House centres in Bath, Torquay, San Diego and Sydney.

Tony Thompson, who founded the Elco centres and managed them for 20 years, is now working as a senior consultant for the Wels group. Martin Lemon, Managing Director of Wels, commented, 'With these [three] centres, our group can now offer an excellent choice of centre and course type.' The three Elco centres are based at Rickmansworth, Newland Park and Ardingley College, all within easy reach of London airports. □

Historic enlargement of EU likely to happen

THE European Union (EU) is set to expand to embrace a 25-state union, a move which has huge political and historic significance and major ramifications for the language travel industry.

The European Commission approved a report in October recommending 10 countries ready for membership. While there are still some hurdles to overcome before accession in 2004 is finalised, political commentators now believe that Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia will become member states. Romania and Bulgaria may also join in 2007.

Karel Klusak of Intact agency in the Czech Republic pointed out the implications that EU membership has for students in his country. The drive to learn foreign languages had started, he said, 'because we know we will need good English and German, possibly other languages'.

Klusak also anticipated more students enrolling at state colleges in the UK, 'which have grants for EU students', and interest in competitively-priced degree courses in Germany, France and Spain. □

Calendar

CEC Network Agent Fair

Date: 3-5 December
Venue: Ottawa, ONT, Canada
Contact: Ella Esen, CEC Network, 578-999 Canada Place, Vancouver BC, V6C 3E1, Canada
Tel: +1 604 408 0588
Fax: +1 604 641 1238
Email: agentfair@cec.apfnet.org

Expolangues

Date: 29 January - 1 February 2003
Venue: Paris, France
Contact: Camille Rabehanta L'Etudiant 27 Rue du Chemin Vert Paris, 75011, France
Tel: +33 148 074 372
Email: camille.rabehanta@letudiant.fr

The VI International Fair "Foreign Languages Plus"

Date: 30 January - 2 February 2003
Venue: Moscow, Russia
Date: 8-9 February 2003
Venue: St Petersburg, Russia
Contact: Stas Gaponov, BKC International House Starovagankovskiy per 15, #5, Moscow, 121019, Russia
Tel: +7 095 737 5225
Fax: +7 095 737 6579
Email: plus@study.ru

American Education Expo

Date: 1-2 February 2003
Venue: Abu-Dhabi, UAE
Date: 3-4 February 2003
Venue: Dubai, UAE
Date: 5-6 February 2003
Venue: Kuwait City, Kuwait
Date: 8-9 February 2003
Venue: Manama, Bahrain
Contact: Max Visconti, ISN Inc. 1500 Market Street 12th Floor East Tower Philadelphia, PA, 19102, USA
Tel: +1 215 246 3432
Fax: +1 215 477 7378
Email: ISN4YOU@aol.com

Aula Madrid

Date: 12-16 March 2003
Venue: Madrid, Spain
Contact: Ana Sánchez-Terán Aula, Parque Ferial Juan Carlos 1, Apdo de Correos 67.067 Madrid, 28067, Spain
Tel: +34 917 225052
Fax: +34 917 225788
Email: asteran@ifema.es

Italian in Italy Workshop

Date: 13-16 March 2003
Venue: Rome, Italy
Contact: Giuseppina Foti Italian in Italy, via Tibullo 10 Roma, 00193, Italy
Tel: +39 066 8307796
Fax: +39 066 869758
Email: info@italianinitaly.it

Kosa International Education Fair

Date: 15-16 March 2003
Venue: Seoul, Korea
Contact: Kosa President c/o Myong Dong Overseas Study Centre Rm 302 Chungung Bldg 825-27 Yoksam-Dong Seoul, 135080, Korea
Tel: +82 27547777
Fax: +82 25561109
Email: mdostudy@chollian.net

The Middle East Workshop

Date: 28-29 March 2003
Venue: Beirut, Lebanon
Contact: Karl Badde, Icef Am Hofgarten 9 Bonn, 53113, Germany
Tel: +49 228201190

Fax: +49 2282011944
Email: icefbonn@icef.com

14th Asian Student Fair

Date: 27 March - 3 April 2003
Venue: Karachi, Lahore & Rawalpindi, Pakistan
Contact: M S Mirza, International Educational Services PO Box 10503 Karachi, 74400, Pakistan
Tel: +92 303 732 6602
Fax: +92 21 567 1540
Email: infoedu@cyber.net.pk

American Education Expo

Date: 28-30 March 2003
Venue: Mexico City, Mexico
Date: 31 March - 1 April 2003
Venue: Lima, Peru
Contact: ISN Inc. (as above)

Salão de Estudante

Date: 15-16 March 2003
Venue: Sao Paulo, Brazil
Date: 18 March 2003
Venue: Curitiba, Brazil
Date: 20-21 March 2003
Venue: Belo Horizonte, Brazil
Date: 23 March 2003
Venue: Salvador, Brazil
Date: 25-26 March 2003
Venue: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Contact: Jason Newman
Nexus Media, Nexus House Azalea Drive, Swanley, Kent, BR8 8HU, UK
Tel: +44 1322 660070
Fax: +44 1322 616305
Email: jason.newman@nexusmedia.com

International Education Fair

Date: 22-23 March 2003
Venue: Hanoi, Vietnam
Date: 24-25 March 2003
Venue: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Contact: Vieca c/o 30 Ta Quang Buu Hanoi, Vietnam
Tel: +84 482 23675
Fax: +84 482 23699
Email: vieca@ipt.vn

International Education Fair

Date: 29-30 March 2003
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand
Contact: Saijai Sriyayanta Tiecea, 503/30 KSL Tower 18th Floor, Sri-Ayudhaya Rd, Phayathai, Rajthavee, Bangkok, 10400, Thailand
Tel: +662 642 6114
Fax: +662 642 6115
Email: admin@tiecea.com

International Education Fair

Date: 4-5 April 2003
Venue: Taipei, Taiwan
Date: 6 April 2003
Venue: Kaosiung, Taiwan
Contact: Vivien Liu, Tosa, Rm 1122 No. 15 Fuhsing Rd Taipei, ROC 105, Taiwan
Tel: +886 277 39330
Fax: +886 277 39481
Email: tosa@tosa.org.tw

American Education Expo

Date: 3-5 April 2003
Venue: Sao Paulo, Brazil
Date: 6-7 April 2003
Venue: Buenos Aires, Argentina
Contact: ISN Inc. (as above)

Expo Belta

Date: 12-13 April 2003
Venue: Sao Paulo, Brazil
Contact: Belta, Avenida Vieira de Carvalho 115 sala 72 Sao Paulo, 01210-010, Brazil
Tel: +55 113 2250740
Fax: +55 113 2250744
Email: info@belta.org.br