

Executive Summary

1. Provide a brief description of the program (including the focus and theme of the program, target audience, size and scope of the program, etc.).

Educators Society for Heritage of India conducted a three week camp for Hindi language and culture from July 14 through August 1, 2014 and enrolled 84 students from grades 3 to 10 from three central Jersey counties (Monmouth, Middlesex and Somerset). The camp was held at the Marlboro Memorial Middle School in cooperation with the Marlboro K-8 school district. The program engaged five classroom teachers, three cultural activities teachers, ten TAs (high school students who have moderate level of proficiency in Hindi language and culture and in technology applications), a director of curriculum, a director of cultural programs, one technology-media lab director and one camp director in addition to three consultants and two administrative staff. The program occupied eight classrooms/ activities rooms, a gym for yoga and games/sports, a Lab, an office, and a cafeteria/auditorium - all air-conditioned facilities - in the modern, spacious, Middle school building.

This year's theme was 'Indian Monsoon'. Monsoon is an integral part of Indian culture and society and it's reflected in centuries of folk lore, art, history, religion and more recently in movies, and other means of entertainment and cultural enrichment. Multitude of authentic material on this theme is readily available for students at every level.

We continued with STEM focus this year as well. In the modern times 'Monsoon' has become a science in itself. The theme encompassed geography of India, earth and atmospheric science, environmental science, ecology, technology & engineering tools to measure and harvest rain water and Math (using mathematical and statistical tools for compiling, analyzing annual rainfall data, predicting trends, and correlating it with lifestyles and festivities.

The curriculum was designed to address real world problems and solutions in the context of India, Indian culture and traditions in everyday life and festivities that are unique to 'Monsoon' season in India.

2. Did the actual program align with the program proposal?

yes

3. If you made any changes, what changes were made and why were the changes made?

One change was made that every one liked and that significantly improved the cultural aspect of our program: Our proposal contained a Field Trip, but based on the previous years experience, we brainstormed and replaced the Field trip with a "Cultural Immersion day" within the school premises. On this Day, we invited five different Indian dance/culture academies to our school and provided each class with one hour of demo/dance learning experience with each of the five dance academies. This gave a very interesting, entertaining and educational exposure about the culture of India to all our students. This was a huge success. We plan to repeat this program in future years if we get the grant again.

Enrollment & Course Credit

	Hindi
Applicants:	130
Starting enrollment:	84
Completed:	82
Participants receiving high school credit:	0
Participants receiving undergraduate credit:	0

Program Outcomes

1. What did participants learn in this program? Identify 3 to 5 major learning outcomes from your proposal.

1. Since most of our students are heritage students who know many words in Hindi and have heard their parents speak Hindi at home, but they (students) hesitate speaking in Hindi. So we focused on interactions that give them opportunities to practice speaking, listening and interpreting. Therefore, all students learned Hindi language and got confidence in speaking and listening in interactive modes.
2. Students also learned about reading, writing, interpreting and presentational skills in Hindi.
3. Month of July is Monsoon season in India. So students learned about the geography of India (where their parents emigrated from) and cultures of different parts of India by reading and listening to current events regarding Monsoon weather in various states of India every day of the camp, as well as special cultural festivals celebrated in different parts of India during this season.

4. Students learned STEM applications with respect to weather satellites, weather forecasting, rain water harvesting, as well as making pie charts, graphs, etc recording rain falls in various places, and comparing rain data from different places and time frames, etc.
5. We held a different 'cultural immersion experience' every Friday during the camp. Thus, students learned with much enjoyment Monsoon related music and dances from various parts of India, including Bollywood dances that are now a quintessential aspect of 'Culture' in modern India.

2. **What evidence exists to show that this learning took place?**

Each student was provided a binder in which they have saved their outputs, including evidence of arts and crafts projects, We have also taken many photographs and videos of class rooms/students in groups, engaged in interactive learning. During the camp, a profusion of evidence was pasted on the walls of the classrooms, craft room and on the walls of the main corridors outside.

Students showed their collective skills of language, culture and STEM in building their rain water harvesting system models with a great team spirit. Showing their talent and skills, students used different materials to build these models. The younger students were impressed by the older peers and built their own projects.

3. **If your student program conducted a field trip, how did it contribute to learning and what evidence do you have to confirm that learning occurred? If not applicable, please type N/A.**

N/A

4. **Please provide any anecdotal information on any plans your students may have to continue their language study during the academic year.**

Out of the 84 students and 10 TAs who were enrolled in the summer program, 56 students and ALL TAs (100%) have taken steps to continue their Hindi language studies - they have joined 2 Hindi Schools conducted by ESHI in Marlboro and Montgomery on weekends during the school year. Thus, out of 94 students (including TAs) 66 will continue their Hindi studies during the year. That 66 out of 94 is over 70%.

5. **Describe community outreach that occurred as a result of your program.**

ESHI held STARTALK Orientation sessions on three days before the camp where community was invited to learn about the STARTALK program and to complete the registration for their children. Also they were asked to volunteer their services for certain tasks. Many parents volunteered to do Gate Duty, facilitating arrival and departure of students to/from the camp. many parents volunteered to help in serving the lunch and snacks each day of the camp.

On one Friday, we organized a Cultural Immersion experience through a Mela/Bazar where many (more than 30) community members came, set up a booth and provided opportunities to students to (make believe) bargain in Hindi to buy (with fake Indian money) food stuff and cultural items. Indian Dance schools came from all over New Jersey to teach/demo Indian dance steps to our students on another 'Cultural Immersion day". On the last Friday of the camp, we invited all parents and siblings of the students in our camp. We plan to continue to spread the word about Startalk program and our camp at appropriate community venues and occasions during the year.

6. **What impact did these outreach activities have on the local community? On your students?**

Not only the communities in three counties (Monmouth, Middlesex and Somerset) from where students came to our camp are now thoroughly familiar with the STARTALK program but greatly admire the Government initiative, funding, and support and ESHI organization and Marlboro Hindi School for organizing this summer program that has been very beneficial to teach Hindi to 90 youngsters (including 10 TAs).

This year we got the word out to wider Indian community in New Jersey via Indian dance schools who came to our summer camp to demo their talents.

7. **What might the long-term impact of these outreach activities be in your community?**

It is expected that, in the long run, our outreach efforts will help grow more community language schools (like Marlboro Hindi School) and more culture oriented dance schools to teach Hindi and Indian culture during the school year. When there is enough interest in learning Hindi, our community members will demand their school districts to offer Hindi as a foreign language in regular schools where Indian American/South Asian students populations are significant proportion of the total student body in the district.

8. **If your program included an online component and a face-to-face session, how did you integrate the online and face-to-face portions of the program? If not applicable, please type N/A.**

N/A

9. **How did the online and face-to-face experiences impact student learning? If not applicable, please type N/A.**

N/A

10. How many hours of professional development activities occurred for your instructional staff pre-program, during the program, and post program?

We held a one week (35 hours) professional development workshop for all our teachers, TAs, and staff, before the camp started.

11. What impact have you observed as a result of these professional development activities?

We have been holding these one week workshops every year for the last five years with the result that every year our teachers are becoming more competent in STARTALK best practices as reflected in the Site Visitor report each year. Finally this year, site visitor report indicated that our teachers have become quite proficient in STARTALK best practices. Over the years, we have built a strong team of very dedicated professionals in running the STARTALK program.

12. To what extent do you feel that your program implemented the STARTALK endorsed principles for effective learning and teaching?

We are confident (and the Site visit report supports our assessment) that ESHI teachers and staff have implemented the STARTALK endorsed principles to a very large extent. If I were to assign a number or grade, I'd say that we have gradually moved from 50% in the first year (2010) to the 90th percentile in 2014.

Reflections

1. What aspects of your program worked well?

Teacher Development workshop provided an opportunity to learn about integrating assessment in lesson planning, effective use of media tools, and collaboration and partnership between teachers and TAs.

Placement: All students were given a written test that had progressively higher level questions in language as well as thematic content. The test taken before the camp was used for placement; after three weeks it was used again for their self-evaluation. Overall, the placement was better this year than in the past. Still there were some issues; some students were reassigned to a different class later, as needed.

First Day of camp began with an Assembly in the Auditorium. We gave an overview of the three weeks program, and reviewed rules etc. to set the tone that it is important to maintain discipline so that the camp will be more fun and a memorable experience for every one. Overall, the strategy worked in improving discipline to a significant level.

The classrooms were student centric providing enough opportunities for students to interact in pairs and in groups.

Assessment was better integrated with lessons this time. There were plenty of formative assessment tasks built in the lessons. It was reflected in students' presentations where they could show the knowledge they gained in content.

Technology tools were better integrated with the lessons this time. Students enjoyed working on iPads. iPads were used for input, research and assessment in about equal proportions.

The theme was well received by students. Irrespective of age they could relate very well with the theme.

2. How did you deal with any challenges that your program encountered?

1. Despite big improvements in student centric lessons, interaction between students in pair or group-work still lacked spontaneity in use of target language. We dealt with this issue by making sure that in addition to a competent and trained teacher in every classroom and activity room (music, yoga, arts& crafts, sports) there were assigned one or more TAs to physically monitor, record or hover around the students. But, still, sometimes it was difficult to enforce only Hindi.

2. Because of lower budget ceiling this year, we received only \$89,000. Therefore, we enrolled only 84 students. (compared to 102 students last year) disappointing many parents/children who could not be taken. We grouped students in five classes, each class of 16 or 17 students, which is a rather large class. We dealt with the challenge by engaging 10 TAs (high school students who know Hindi) who can assist teachers in classrooms and activities (music, yoga, craft, etc)

3. This year, we had many new TAs, so despite that TAs also attended the one week prof dev workshop with the teachers, some of the TAs were found lacking in ability, interest and willingness to take on the challenging responsibility, as needed. When complaints from the teachers came at the end of the first week, we called a meeting of all TAs and communicated once again in more forceful way our expectations of their jobs. We also implemented more strict rules for TAs to follow including their daily and weekly evaluation by the teachers they are assigned to work with as well by the administration (camp director, directors of curriculum, cultural program, technology, etc). While the results were positive, further improvement is warranted.

3. To what extent do you feel your program contributed to the goal of STARTALK to increase numbers of speakers of critical languages and to build the supply of qualified world language teachers?

ESHi has contributed very significantly to increase the numbers of Hindi speakers:

- At least 50 (of the 82 students) have become speakers of Hindi at Intermediate low to Intermediate High Level.
- All 10 TAs have improved their Hindi speaking to Intermediate high to Advanced low levels.

- At least 10 teachers who were already native speakers of Hindi, and were teachers of Hindi language in a community school, have received professional development so that they have become more confident in implementing STARTALK methods and become effective Hindi teachers not only in the summer programme but also in the year round programme. .

4. **Which of the STARTALK endorsed principles for effective teaching and learning did you implement most effectively? Which principle was the most challenging to implement? Please explain your response.**

1. Including more tasks for practice and formative assessments in lessons - using pair and group work to provide more opportunities to interact, practice and use the skills learned to demonstrate what they learned in a language function,
2. Variation in grouping- more information gap tasks, jigsaw tasks to refresh and re-form groups to work on higher level tasks,
3. Grouping with other classes-works well at higher level classes where different skills can be matched to accomplish higher level functions,
4. Effective use of iPads in combining research and presentation, lesson and formative assessments, video recording interviews and narratives

5. Differentiation at multiple fronts at the same time is the most challenging aspect- Differentiation is needed at age, development level, skills, motivation, background cultural knowledge, opportunity to communicate and practice outside classroom environment.

5. **What have you learned from your STARTALK experience?**

1. Theme and curriculum needs to be centered around what students can relate to their own lifestyle,
2. More hands-on projects particularly if using a STEM context,
3. More opportunities to recycle language particularly at lower levels, rather than having more content,
4. Use familiar content to introduce new language,
5. More outdoor learning opportunity if resources permit.

6. **What advice do you have for new STARTALK programs?**

1. Share your vision about the topic and overall view of your plans so that students understand goals,
2. Let students share with the class their personal goals and team them up for common objective,
3. Focus on fewer topics to provide more opportunity to use same language in different context
4. Activity and movement oriented lesson planning,
5. Integrate different types of activities for assessment
5. Include multi-media if possible,
6. Include tasks that tap into different talents and learning styles
7. Increase opportunities for collaboration between students in the same class or across different classes to solve problems so that they interact more in target language,

7. **What unique feature of your program would you like to share with other STARTALK programs?**

1. Placement test and self-assessment combined,
2. High School Youth involvement as TAs,
3. Cultural Immersion in lieu of field trip,
4. Effective use of media tools integrated in lesson plans,
5. Interaction of students from different classes,
6. Blending instruction hours with other activities instead of a morning/evening division between language instruction and cultural education.

8. **If you were to offer another STARTALK program, what would you do differently?**

1. Placement: If resources permit, we'll create a separate class for young heritage students who have good speaking skills so that they can be trained towards more reading and writing to match their conversation skills,
2. We would prefer to have smaller classes (12-14 students per class) by hiring more teachers. That will help in maintaining discipline, maintaining target language use during group activities, better outcomes overall.
3. We'll provide more training to TAs and exercise better control from day one so they fully understand their role, responsibilities and expectations in the classrooms,
4. Give teachers more opportunities to focus on lesson planning rather than spending disproportionate amount of time in providing more input than needed to teachers during the workshop.

Recommendations

1. **How will future programs address the recommendations made in the site visit report?**

1. During Registration, provide information about online resources so students can learn the script before camp starts,
2. Add a class for younger students with higher language skills,

3. Increase research component for higher level students by giving them offline tasks to do outside the camp time so they can learn while creating needed resources for use by lower classes.
 4. Higher level class will have a blog where they participate daily. It'd be tied to some incentive for top contributors,
 5. Provide incentive such as extra outdoor time for meaningful better quality work finished timely by the entire class.
2. **What changes could STARTALK make to help you better design and implement a successful program?**
1. Increase grant amounts for successful programmes, in proportion to number of students served, so that they can further improve their quality and expand their reach,
 2. Reduce paperwork and formalities to save administrative time and help focus/concentrate on teaching languages. STARTALK needs to evaluate if so much paperwork is serving its intended purpose, Try to minimize admin overhead.
 4. Programmes that implemented STARTALK principles more effectively, efficiently and innovatively should have honorary mention during the Fall/Spring conference each year so that other programmes can learn from those programmes rather than being lost in a long list of funded programmes.
 5. More timely feedback from team leaders is more helpful and greatly appreciated.