

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 (ESHA) conducted a three week summer program this year on the Theme of “Food and Exercise for Health” as it relates to the First Lady Michelle Obama’s twin initiatives: “MyPlate” and Let's Move! aimed at obesity awareness and prevention in school age children. The concept of MyPlate was translated in Hindi as “Meri Thaalii”.

The program enrolled 82 Heritage students of ages 9 to 16 from the local community, along with 12 High School students, who possessed adequate proficiency in Hindi language and culture, who were engaged as Teaching Assistants (TAs). Many students had participated in previous STARTalk programs or Hindi classes in the heritage schools run by ESHA on weekends during the school year, but some students had never taken any formal Hindi classes. This STARTalk program provided all students an opportunity to learn Hindi language and culture in an authentic Indian cultural setting.

The program was hosted in the Marlboro Memorial Middle school in Marlboro, NJ. through the cooperation of the (K-8) public school district. Students were placed in six classrooms, each staffed with one teacher and one TA, and equipped with a PC or laptop, a few iPADS, and a projector. Also, for a 45 minute period every day, each class went to the media lab equipped with 20 iPADS and projector for the teacher and TAs. Additionally, there were several well structured cultural activities every day including yoga, music, dance, art and craft, games and sports, and of course a great variety of healthy vegetarian foods during lunch and breaks.

We also collaborated with the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, community outreach department. A nutritionist of Indian cultural background from RWJUH trained all our teachers on the first day of the (six days of) professional development workshop. Subsequently, a team of three nutritionists from RWJUH gave an age appropriate orientation on good food and nutrition to all our students during the first week of the program so they had a reasonably good understanding of well balanced nutrition.

We developed four different curriculum templates: Novice Mid, Novice High, Intermediate Mid, and Intermediate High. The children learned language skills, including vocabulary and sentence structure, and Indian culture as they learned how to design a healthy, balanced menu and exercise schedule. They put together healthy snacks and meals according to the traditional ‘Indian thaalii’. They researched health benefits of Indian spices and herbs. They learned the practical knowledge about ancient wisdom of Ayurveda and Yoga. They discussed and reasoned the merits of wholesome foods that should be consumed, and foods that should be avoided. They learned how to sprout wheat germs and making nutritionally rich salads, smoothies and yogurt from milk. In the media lab, they researched health hazards of obesity and the nutritional value of various foods. They analyzed nutritional information to compute calories of different kinds of foods in a ‘thaalii’ and to assemble a well balanced menu for a day, or for a small friends party.

Working in small interactive groups, students prepared multimedia proposals for a week of “Health Camp for Obesity Awareness”, featuring balanced diet and exercise. In meaningfully interconnected strings of sentences, they discussed, provided reasoning and debated plans for a week of healthy menu and a fun workout schedule with physical exercises like yoga, dance, sports, etc. They made pamphlets, presented posters and slide-shows; planned skits, wrote songs/jingles, gave yoga and dance demonstrations to convince school officials that their proposal is the best.

On the last day of the camp, they presented songs, dances and skits that they had learned to community members, parents, teachers and peers. It is hoped that students will carry a lifelong lesson on importance of good eating and exercise habits that they will enforce in their lives while availing opportunities to practice their heritage language skills during meal times and in parties, and also share with family and friends all that they have learned in a brief span of three weeks.

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?**
No changes were made.

Enrollment & Course Credit

	Hindi
Applicants:	110

	Hindi
Starting enrollment:	82
Completed:	78
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.

Students learned language skills relating to two very important and essential cultural subject matters: (1) traditional Indian Thali with the healthful Indian vegetarian foods, herbs, spices, and (2) vigorous Indian dances like Bhangra (Punjabi) and Bollywood, both aimed at keeping them in good health life-long, without obesity. These are the subjects they see in their kitchen and family room every day. Now they have the language skills as well as scientific background and better cultural appreciation for them in their daily lives.

They also learnt health benefits of Indian spices and herbs, simple but healthful Indian recipes and how to grow sprouts and making nutritionally rich salads, smoothies and plain yogurt from milk. They learned the practical knowledge about ancient wisdom of Ayurveda and Yoga, they learned about wholesome foods that should be consumed and foods that should be avoided. They learned to drink water with every meal (rather than sugary drinks). They became well aware of health hazards of obesity.

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

During the last week, students working in small interactive groups, prepared multimedia proposals for “Health Camp for Obesity Awareness”, featuring balanced diet and exercise. In meaningfully interconnected strings of sentences, they discussed, provided reasoning and debated plans for a week of healthy menu and a fun workout schedule with physical exercises like yoga, dance, sports, etc. They made pamphlets, presented posters and slide-shows; planned skits, wrote songs/jingles, gave yoga and dance demonstrations (in a mock competition) to convince school officials that their proposal is the best. On the last day of the camp, they presented songs, dances and skits that they had learned to community members, parents, teachers and peers. Liguafolio was used by all students in grades 6 and above so some evidence is in linguafolio records. We also had a TA take photos and videos of the products of all class rooms. We also found that in the cafeteria, students were eating, commenting on, showing definite preference for and taking more nutritionally wholesome foods. Some students took samples of wheat germs, fruit- and vege-salads and smoothies home to show to their parents and to ask parents to make such healthful food choices at home. So we have plenty of evidence that this learning actually did take place in our camp.

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.

We did not conduct a field trip. Previous years experience showed that while it is fun for kids, we do not have any place in one hour's drive from our school where we can take 94 students (and 16 teachers and volunteer staff to chaperon) where they can learn Hindi in an Indian cultural setting.

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

Forty two of the participants and eight of the TAs (total of 50 students) have enrolled in the Marlboro Hindi school, a heritage school conducted by ESHA during weekends through out the school year. This way they will continue to build their language skills from where they had reached at the end of the summer camp.

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

We have an extensive email list where we broadcast the startalk program. Additionally, we get our program sent to all parents in the six primary schools and two middle schools through regular emails from the school administration. Additionally, the Freehold Regional High School district posts our program in the bulletin boards in their six high schools. We also post the program in the Monmouth County library, and Marlboro library and many Indian stores in the area. We also take opportunity to speak about STARTalk program, formally and informally, during some of the community gatherings.

Every year we engage as Consultant a senior Spanish teacher from our public School district. So she and the school administration is well aware of our community's interest in learning Hindi for their children.

Every year on the last day of the program, we invite all parents, siblings, past participants and TAs as well as school board members, superintendents of K-8 and High School districts, and Cultural Minister from the Consulate of India in New York,

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

As a result our program is well known in the larger community. We get more applicants for participants, volunteers and for TA positions than we need within two weeks. We also have a large pool of teachers who apply for teaching positions in our camp.

Our outreach efforts have successfully expanded the awareness of learning Hindi and of STARTalk program for promoting Hindi.

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

As economy improves, school budgets get better, and Indian community interest continues to grow in their children learning Hindi as a result of our outreach, It is hoped that schools can offer Hindi as a foreign language at some future date. However it would require hiring a certified, licensed, Hindi teacher. There are few teachers with the required qualifications. NFLC and STARTalk are working with some universities (Kean Univ in NJ) to produce qualified Hindi teachers.

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 conducted six days of professional development activities before the program started. Total = 35 hours of PD offered.

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

As a result of PD, all teachers had developed lesson plans before the first day of the camp, All classrooms were set up before the first day of the camp, The first day of the camp was not chaotic, it progressed quite smoothly. Training of TAs was especially helpful, they knew what we expected from them and tried to deliver. Participants and TAs were more disciplined, Curriculum and lesson plans were followed. The classes were student centered, interactive, engaging the participants. Target language was spoken most of the time.

There was no formal PD during the program, but site visit was used as an opportunity to share the site visit report with all teachers and discuss how to make substantial progress on items brought forth for improvement by the site visitors.

The day after the program ended, all teachers and TAs were gathered to reflect on what went well, and what could be improved in the next years program, if funded. That was a great collective learning opportunity.

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

The theme was enthusiastically followed in all its dimensions: The theme resonated with everyone: teachers, students and parents as well, because it is relevant in everyday life and we can all relate with it very well.

The classrooms were student centric and interactive and were engaging for students. The theme provided the teachers many opportunities to do practical, small group based, interactive activities.

Target language was used 90% of the time after the first week.

The theme provided the cultural underpinning for the entire camp program and activities. With yoga, ayurveda, Indian ethnic foods, herbs and spices, classical Indian music and dances, arts and craft. Age appropriate authentic materials were all around, especially for practical examples like making (and eating) salads and smoothies, germinating wheat grass, making yogurt from milk.

It was the most culturally integrated, authentic Indian Hindi camp. I would recommend that STARTalk website should add our curriculum as a Resource for newer Hindi programs to follow.

Reflections

1. What aspects of your program worked well?

Teacher Development workshops: Several workshops were arranged starting May 17 until an intense weeklong session prior to the summer school. Strategy to start early to familiarize teachers with the curriculum document and provide them support periodically in the process of lesson planning worked well. It was helpful in strengthening the team spirit where everyone learns and grows together. As a result, lessons were more student-centric and interactive and were able to engage students. RWJ workshop provided a good starting point for the PD workshops and lesson plan development.

We added one classroom with one teacher and one TA this year. Small Class Size was very helpful in keeping the classroom interactive and manageable.

Students all across irrespective of age group and levels could relate very well with the theme. The theme encompassed geography of India, traditional food practices that were considered healthy. Students also got very practical knowledge about need for changing food and physical activities in modern times with changing lifestyles. They enjoyed hands-on food preparations, food tasting and RWJ part of the summer school immensely. They also got practical knowledge about how old norms of food pyramid transformed into the more practical concepts of My Plate or Meri Thaalii.

The classrooms were student centric and interactive and were engaging for students. They learned a lot of practical aspects and we hope they will carry those concepts beyond their own lives and bring it to their family members.

Assessment: the summative assessment tasks were well defined. 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. Students from younger groups enjoyed creating their own stories using picture prompts and sentences provided by the teachers and TAs.

Presentational Writing integrated well with the ACTFL benchmarks. Students were instructed in producing visual tools and integrating them with writing tools to communicate their ideas more effectively. Writing Workshop introduced for the first time in Novice classes and continued for Intermediate classes were very effective in connecting words to alphabets for beginners and explaining writing mechanics, editing tips, grammar and sentence structure in the context of preparing presentation material in different formats for their summative task presentations. Skits were written and presented by students in Intermediate classes in street theatre format to raise awareness about difficulties people face with obesity, and generated interest in experimenting and using the language confidently. Presenting their skit on the final day of the Summer School was a source of pride. Students showed their collective skills and team spirit in presenting their ideas to the whole summer school community through a group activity in the hall ways.

The music programme was well conducted this year. It reflected the teacher's familiarity with the language. Sports and Fitness programmes were well intentioned. Dance as Exercise was a good introduction and many students benefitted from it who would not opt for playing outdoors. It is a good idea to give that choice. Finally, the post camp meeting of teachers on a separate day worked better because teachers had the whole weekend to reflect on their experience during the camp and came better prepared to share their thoughtful reflections..

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

1. Its a challenge to get teachers out of their teacher-centric teaching mode and make the class student-centric. So we invited Prof. Gambhir on the third day of the workshop when all the lesson plans were scheduled complete, He asked each classroom teacher to take turn to come in front of the class and teach one segment of their lesson plan. That was followed by constructive critiquing and suggestions for improving the lesson plans and for making the class more student centric.

2. Discipline is an issue in a camp of 82 students and 12 TAs. A few students, particularly in Intermediate classes, seem to engage in disrupting the classroom proceedings. Therefore, on the first day of the camp, we held the Assembly in the Cafetorium. Dr. Ved Chaudhary gave an overview of the three weeks to come, and reviewed rules etc. to set the tone that it is important to maintain discipline so that we make Summer camp experience fun and memorable. Overall, the strategy worked in improving discipline to a significant level. Small Class Size was very helpful in maintaining the discipline and keeping the classroom interactive and manageable.

3. We engaged a High School senior (going to college in Fall) as a teacher. Although she had proficiency in Hindi Language and had served as a TA in previous years, still I was not fully confident engaging her as a teacher. So we sent her to a Hindi-Urdu teachers professional dev workshop in Austin, TX. That was very helpful. This young professional served very well as a teacher.

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?

Our program has been very successful in enabling or improving the skills of 82 participants and 12 TAs, total = 94 students. About 50 of these students will continue to learn more and improve their language skills in a heritage school during the year. So we'll have 50 students with one years worth of language skills by summer of next year.

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.

We were most successful in implementing a theme based program, integrating language and culture, and utilizing many authentic products and materials.

Most challenging was to maintain 90% target language, especially for those students who had no prior language skills. Also this problem persisted during cafeteria and sports activities, etc.

5. What have you learned from your STARTALK experience?

We have been learning many things from startalk camps over the last six years. Before the start of the camp, we hold a Teachers PD and train the teachers in lesson planning, interactive classes, culture integration, continuous assessment, etc., Following the camp, we do a Reflections/Feedback session with all the teachers and staff. Because of our PDs and

Reflections and Site Visit reports, every year our camp runs better than the prev years. Our most important learnings are: choose a culturally interesting theme, assign a team of our most experienced teachers to develop curriculum at least one month before the camp, teachers need a lot of preparation in STARTalk methodology and need to spend a lot of effort in preparing all the lesson plans before the camp starts. Assign a team of our most experienced teachers to review all lesson plans and be available through out the camp to help guide the teachers. Its a lot of professional intensive work to get the camp to the point that it can provide the maximum educational benefit, ie language skills to all participants.

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

I can repeat what I said in the above item #5. Our advice:

choose a culturally interesting theme, assign a team of your most experienced teachers to develop curriculum at least one month before the camp, teachers need a lot of preparation in STARTalk methodology and need to spend a lot of effort in preparing all the lesson plans before the camp starts. Assign a team of your most experienced teachers to review all lesson plans and be available through out the camp to help guide the teachers. Its a lot of professional intensive work to get the camp to the point that it can provide the maximum educational benefit, ie language skills to all participants. We would gladly share our curriculum with any new Hindi program looking for an interesting theme.

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

1. Hindi language learning with total Cultural integration (vegetarian food, hands-on preparing salads, smoothies, growing wheat germ, making yogurt, etc, plus integration with yoga, music, dance, art, craft, mela/bazar, high intensity physical exercises with Bhangra and bollywood dances, etc.).

2. Engaging High School students, with some proficiency in Hindi, as Teaching Assistants.

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

If funded, we would add more rigor in student placement in one of the six classes before the camp starts and similarly, add more rigor in selection, placement and training of TAs in classrooms or in the dance/music/media lab or other activities. We have several cultural activities periods (for dance, music, yoga, games, sports) every day. Therefore, we would also add one more teacher for cultural activities.

Recommendations

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

1. On the first day of the teachers PD workshop, before the camp, I would review the recommendations made in the 2015 site visit report and discuss with all the teachers on how to improve on the areas recommended by the site visitors.

2. During PD workshop, we'll provide more intensive training to teachers in frequent assessments/feedback, and creating more interactive classes in small groups, etc. During the camp, our lead instructor(s) will monitor and guide teachers to assure that the classrooms are student-centric, interactive, engaging and that teachers are assessing whether or not students are grasping the material and also providing feedback to students..

3. Teachers would plan for more unrehearsed speaking or interactive exercises in their lesson plans, in second and third weeks,

2. What changes could STARTALK make to help you better design and implement a successful program?

STARTALK has made significant improvements in the process flow over the years. Spring and fall conferences are very worth while. Contracts are signed and payments made more expeditiously. However, the curriculum review process and site visitors assessment criterion etc could be further standardized and improved upon.