PRATARKA

incubated at:

assam startup

SPEAKINDIA

DESIGNED TO HELP STUDENTS THINK

PROSPECTUS

SCHOOL

THE PROBLEM

1

We are currently inhabiting a world where young learners are forced to interact with ideas available at the global stage. This means that they are supposed to recognize such iterations within personal/collective media consumption as well as interpersonal relationships.

2

Our contemporary society wishes to push young learners into tried and tested frameworks of employment. While this appears to be a moderately safe bet, it fails to account for a few things -

1. Ever rising unhealthy spheres of competition.
2. Little to no focus on the nature of said future employment.
3. Little consideration for ever growing fields of opportunities.

3

Owing to the Coronavirus pandemic, young learners have had to rely on their digital devices and the internet more than any other generation thus far. This specific phenomenon urgently calls for a proper focus on internet literacy and practices.

4

Schools, across educational boards, have always been under tremendous pressure to cover the curriculum provided to batches of young learners within a specified time period. Teachers are additionally burdened with the responsibility of preparing young learners to put their best forward for routine examinations.

5

Thus far, we have noticed a trend wherein best collaborative practices amongst young learners are often restricted to the field of sports and athletics. There seems to be an invisible divide that restricts them from bringing the same aspect within the classroom. This is not restricted to group projects, or studying together for examinations.

ACADEMIC OPINION ON THE EFFICIENCY OF SPECIALISED CRITICAL THINKING MODULES IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES: AN OVERVIEW OF STATISTICS AND ARGUMENTS

Specialised critical thinking programs for schools and colleges have been widely attempted in the last two decades. These attempts have demonstrated two crucial things:

1. Nurturing Critical Thinking abilities has proven to be an effective method in improving students abilities to understand their course material better, and in expanding their soft skills arsenal.
2. Specialised modules, and audience-specific programs curated and conducted at the behest of authorities, or designed and attempted privately within institutions and organisations- are both promising methods of imparting critical thinking skills.

Examples could be made of the ARDESOS program conducted by the Salamanca College in Spain which proved to be extremely efficient. In a survey conducted by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC & U), 95% of Chief Academic officers from 433 institutions rated critical thinking as one of the most important skills in their students. Interestingly, 81% of the employers surveyed by the AAC & U also wanted colleges and institutions to place stronger emphasis on critical thinking. A similar finding resulted from another survey conducted by Casper-Lotto and Barrington in as early as 2006. Again, the AHELO project sponsored by the global giant OECD (organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) also included critical thinking as a core competency when evaluating general learning outcomes of students across multiple nations. The New Education Policy, 2020 applicable in India, also discussed the crucial importance that soft skills hold. Similar programs have been integrated within the curriculum in Philippines, Singapore, and the Republic of Korea. Attempts of academics and pedagogies in early 2000s also led to the foundation of commercially available California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST). The program developed by the team at Pratarka™ also focuses heavily on providing accurate and realistic assessment results to participants.

WHAT DO WE INTEND TO DO?

We wish to collaborate with esteemed educational institutions in order to facilitate an additional environment for our young learners so that they can a) rationalise learnings from their school curriculum, and b) bridge its perceived gap with real life applications.

We shall be inculcating a critical thinking framework within this environment that directly equips young learners with the capacity to move forward with an inquisitive bent of mind. It is of the utmost importance that we encourage our leaders of tomorrow with curiosity.

Relying on competency and outcome based learning models, we shall be providing a tailored critical thinking curriculum designed to fit the needs of young learners and that of their esteemed educational institutio.

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

There are Four Key Areas that the SpeakIndia program functions on -

Inquiry Based Learning

Our approach towards education is firmly situated within Inquiry-Based learning practices. We think that young learners are innately curious. Some require a nudge to question things that are made available to them, whereas others require the right tools to do the same. Each module within the SpeakIndia curriculum ensures that learners probe, explore, and discover new ways to apply their learnings from school. Interdisciplinary engagements with real-world contexts actively foster their natural curiosity, encouraging critical thinking and ownership of their educational journey. In the process of analysing simple as well as complex problems, they acquire skills that extend beyond the classroom, equipping them for lifelong learning and success in our ever-evolving world.

Verbal Communication

As educators, we regularly come across young learners who display tremendous potential. However, we are aware of the fact that a significant portion of these individuals often lose out owing to a lack of belief and confidence. Our focus on verbal communication is not simply tied to the idea of boosting confidence; it is connected to honing the power of speech to aid processes of critical thinking and persuasion.The ability to speak without hesitation is important for any kind of collaborative exercise. It is one of the cornerstones of emerging as a strong leader.

Problem Identification and Solution

Research and industry trends continually underscore the ability to dissect complex challenges and formulate innovative solutions as indispensable for success. Learner responses to problem solving generally range from enthusiasm to skepticism. The SpeakIndia curriculum relies on both these responses to bring forth a sustained approach. Skepticism is important to not just identify an issue, but to also ratify the proposed solutions. Enthusiasm, on the other hand, drives the process forward. Using a wide range of case studies, learners are slowly roped in to work within team setups and build holistic responses to the same. We strive to turn our future leaders into proactive problem solvers, innovators, and leaders, positioning them competitively within diverse professional terrains.

Collaborative Creativity

Research indicates that there is a pressing pedagogical need to inculcate teamwork and innovative thinking competencies. Through structured endeavours, the SpeakIndia curriculum addresses this specific need. Some learners are well aware of the benefits that collaborative exercises have on the playground, whereas others are sceptical of such processes owing to the competition that waits for them outside the boundaries of their school. Our modules focus on removing these inhibitions by introducing learners to the benefits of systematic collaboration in each lesson. Peer learning strategies are employed to engage in ideation, distribution of knowledge, and arrive at innovative solutions to problems. We wish to delve deeper into the power of communal learning and interpersonal respect within every classroom. This is a crucial area that requires attention in order for learners to thrive in professional landscapes and vocational endeavours.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE CURRICULUM + QUARTERLY GOALS + SKILLS

Goals of the facilitators

QUARTER 1

Opening up in-class communication

- Identify and establish peer-networks
- Establishing Channels of Communication with mentors/facilitators
- Working towards different group dynamics within the classroom

Observation Skills

- Nurture inquisitiveness and curiosity
- Build on an inquiry based approach towards learning
- Identifying objects, tools, and instances to promote nuanced understanding

Inductive and Abductive reasoning

- Introduction to Logic
- Using Observation to investigate probable conclusions
- The ability to make claims and connections

QUARTER 2

Collaborative Skills

- Creating a balanced environment within the classroom
- Facilitate a process of deeper engagement and understanding with content
- Understanding and working with diverse perspectives

Problem identification

- Providing the tools to identify issues
- Identifying different causes and factors that lead to the issue at hand
- Labelling the issue in a proper fashion in order for a smooth resolution

Deductive reasoning

- Introduction to Logic II
- Using strategies to investigate claims being made
- Being able to deduce possible routes of solutions

QUARTER 3

Research Practices and Methods

- Introduction to different types of research
- Building an environment for collecting different types of facts, figures, and evidentiary practices
- Introduction and proficiency building in conducting independent investigations

Problem Solution

- Utilising Higher order thinking skills
- Analysing and synthesising different types of information
- Providing innovative solutions

QUARTER 4

Capstone Projects

- A dedicated space to test out the wide range skills made available throughout the course of months
- A concrete project that allows learners to apply their minds and knowledge to solve real world problems
- A display of collaborative effort

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

30 percent - Capstone Project

Spread over 1-2 months, students will be provided with problem prompts taken from the real-world. Depending on the institution's bandwidth and interests, these can be group or individual endeavours. Capstone projects are intended to provide feasible interventions. During this period, the mentor will act as a sounding board and a facilitator for the student's area of action. Projects will be graded on relevance, invention, innovation, and reliability.

10 percent - CATS

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATS) are based on the mentor's regular interaction with the students in class. These can range from reflective exercises within the classroom, the kind of participation that students exhibit over the duration of the course, communication and reliance on their peer-networks, as well as surprise tests.

20 percent - Group Assignments

Three group assignments of increasing complexity spread across the quarters. These assignments are meant to strengthen the idea of collaborative learning within the classroom. Mentors will be able to gauge different strengths of participation and leadership abilities across the classroom.

20 percent - Individual Assignments

Three assignments of increasing complexity spread across the year to test reasoning and analytical skills of the students. These will be investigative exercises where students will be asked to work with different kinds of information. They will be tested on their ability to apply different logical structures while working towards a goal.

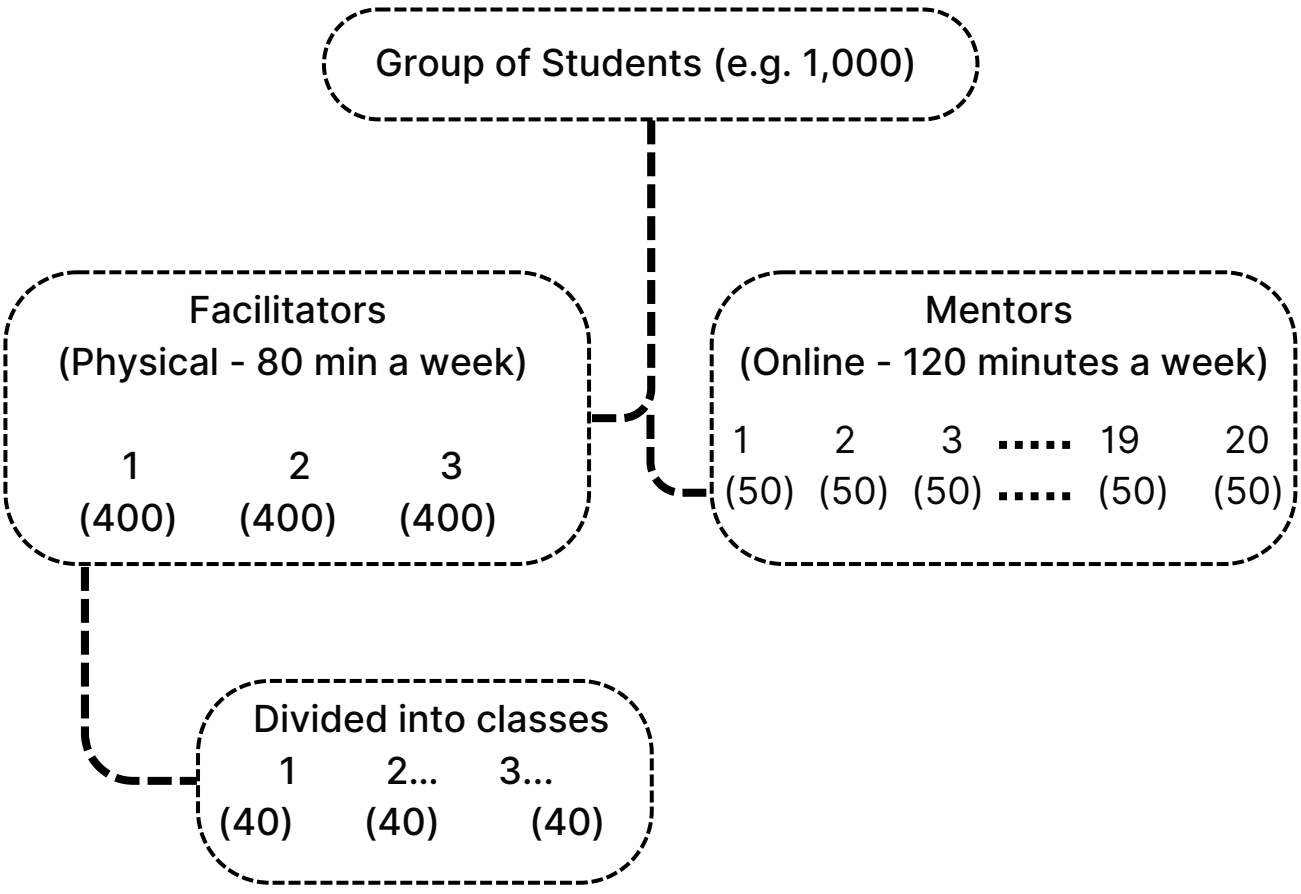
The first year of the SpeakIndia Program is geared towards setting up a common base for all the students of the institution. Albeit with varied levels of complexity and content, each classroom should be able to display different degrees of basic skills. Once this is achieved, we shall move towards different paths to pursue different kinds of critical thinking and skill building.

Each year, from then on, SpeakIndia shall focus on building specific skill-sets within specific classrooms.

Goals of the Individual Group Leaders

- Skill Application Sessions
- Individual Assessment
- Personalised Evaluation
- Additional Guidance

Student : Teacher breakdown



GOALS OF FACILITATORS

- Opening up in-class communication
- Observation skills
- Inductive and Abductive reasoning
- Collaborative skills
- Problem identification
- Deductive reasoning
- Research practices and methods
- Problem solving
- Capstone projects

GOALS OF MENTORS

- Skill application sessions
- Individual Assessment
- Personalised evaluation
- Additional guidance

PROGRAM OFFERINGS

- 64 sessions offered during a year with 2 sessions of 45 minutes every week, taken by qualified facilitators through offline sessions.
- Group mentoring sessions every week with the goal of applying the theoretical portions through group discussions, informal conversations, analysing current affairs
- Mentors work with the goal of developing students' interpersonal and speaking skills
- Analytical and performance reports of each individual student
- Masterclasses by relevant industry experts
- Mobile application "Pratarka" to take quizzes, form discussion platforms, read current affairs

AN EdTECH ADVANTAGE

How are we tech and data driven?

Detailed Analytics and Performance Report

Our modules are designed and linked to data points curated by mentors, collated by data scientists through our mobile application

These data points help us navigate through the year-long program and understand patterns of improvement and growth

These patterns are then quantified to give students and the institution a breakdown of their performances from day 1

Along with additional qualitative data attained through facilitators and mentors, these are correlated and a simplified report is shared in parts with each individual student

PAYMENT PARTNERSHIP WITH INSTITUTIONS

Cost Minimisation Method

At Pratarka, we recognise the massive upkeep and various budgetary hurdles that educational institutions have. Therefore our curriculum-integrated programs are available at **no additional cost to the institutions**.We recommend that our client institutions partner with us in billing the cost directly to the benefiting pupils as part of the total fee charged by the institution.

Unique Value Addition for Client Institutions

- Our payment structure resonates with our goal of partnering academically with the institution and integrating our curriculum with other benefits already being offered by them.
- Our client institutions have a distinct advantage in offering high-quality modernised and holistic education in the respective regions.
- This also conveys to the guardians and pupils that the program is an **additional academic benefit directly provided by the institution to the students**.

HOW DO WE SELECT OUR FACILITATORS?

Our facilitators are sensitised and highly qualified professionals who are selected for the role on the basis of a uniform, inflexible and controlled evaluation process spread across three phases. This ensures that their interactions with students are productive, uniform, and quality controlled.

The phases of evaluation are as follows

Written applications and examination of academic and professional record

Demonstration of logical, and interpersonal skills assessed through personality tests

Assessment of teaching and pedagogical ability through a uniform group interaction method

“Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each”

-Plato
5th Century BCE

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