

Overview of the program

Storytelling has been the oldest form of communication known to human societies, the earliest among them inscribed on caves. Stories have also been the way knowledge has been handed over several centuries.

Sopaan has been designed as a bilingual learning program for children, developing the passion and confidence for reading and learning, built on a foundation of human values and essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking and creativity. The core focus of this program is to improve the reading, comprehension, critical thinking and creativity skills of children along the twin strands of storytelling and experiential learning, building and strengthening the foundational literacy of children.

This course caters to teachers, parents, school leaders, curriculum coordinators, and other interested volunteers working with primary school children.

Objectives

The core objective of the program is to demonstrate a model of language learning within the school system, catering to multiple stakeholders within the education system. The objectives of the program across different stakeholders are described below.

1. Building skills of learning, critical thinking and collaboration in children
2. Creating a community of teachers who can facilitate the development of language competencies required for lifelong learning
3. Supporting the development of the school as a learning organisation - comprising of teachers, students and the community
4. Nurturing the learning ecosystem, developing a network of teachers, schools and institutions for creating, sharing and adapting resources and best practices

Curriculum and structure

This is a supplementary language learning program designed to work alongside regular language instruction. The focus is on building the four competencies of language learning - listening, speaking, reading and writing in a constructivist framework - using stories as pegs. Functional communication skills as well as using language for learning will be emphasized.

Stories as a methodology and outcome of language learning will be interwoven with all the instructional units for listening and speaking, reading and writing. Children learn from stories and learn to tell stories - building listening skills, comprehension and vocabulary, and (verbal) composition. Resources will include bilingual storybooks for developing language vocabulary and fluency, along with a repository of activities to build and strengthen foundational literacy.

The curriculum focus on building competencies and fluency in English; however, the approach and resources could be applicable for other vernacular languages, and teachers will be encouraged to co-create resources for supporting language learning in their classroom contexts.

Training

This training is designed entirely as an online course. The curriculum includes an introduction to different kinds of techniques to develop skills required for literacy among young students, combining tools and applications available for teaching and developing lesson plans integrating digital resources and other non-digital activities. The teachers' training content is structured across different learning units focusing on the Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) skills and using storytelling to develop these competencies. Teachers' learning resources are supported with materials and classroom activities for students, catering to different levels of language competencies.

Each unit comprises an interactive webinar, followed by participants' self-work through reading, completing self-assessment quizzes, sharing in discussion forums and completing assignments. Teachers are encouraged to create, curate, share and pilot teaching-learning resources and methodologies learnt in the course with their school children. The sharing of resources and feedback from the pilot strengthens the learning for all participants.

Expected learning outcomes

At the end of this course, participants are expected to:

1. Have an appreciation of the nature of language learning and the role of stories in creating a language learning environment.
2. Be able to work with experiential materials for building foundational literacy in young students.
3. Be able to build functional and communicative competencies in English while strengthening the first language of the students.