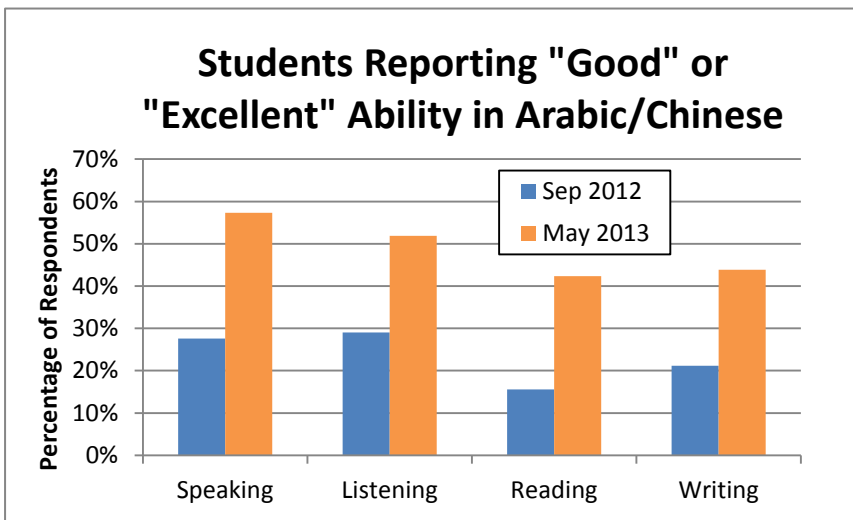


# TCLP 2012-2013 Year in Review

As the 2012-2013 school year drew to a close, American Councils staff distributed surveys in an effort to assess the impact that TCLP had made on exchange teachers, mentor teachers, and students in host schools across the United States. Surveys were also distributed to parents, providing valuable insight into the experiences that elementary school students had while studying the Arabic and Chinese languages through TCLP. In all, 225 students and 41 parents from 18 out of the 24 TCLP host schools took the survey.

The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive: TCLP is making a tremendous difference in the lives of its U.S., Chinese, and Egyptian participants. Students were asked to rate their own Arabic and Chinese abilities in the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). These results were compared to answers that students gave in a baseline survey taken in September 2012, at the beginning of the school year. As shown in the chart (below), students reported dramatic gains in their command of the target languages. Across all areas, these data suggest high teacher effectiveness. Students in 2012-2013 particularly improved their speaking skills, which speaks to the advantages that exchange teachers offer when teaching pronunciation and conversation skills.



Program staff also asked students to rate their own knowledge about various areas of Arabic and Chinese culture. Overall, the results were impressive. At least 90% of students said they “know a lot” or “know a little” about half of all categories surveyed, which stands in sharp contrast to numbers from the baseline survey at the beginning of the school year. Students reported the biggest jump in their knowledge of political and economic issues, followed by recent Arab/Chinese history, modern-day society, and traditions, festivals, and holidays. American Councils staff plan to use this information to inform the planning of

## What Students Are Saying

“Before, I hardly knew anything on China, and now I feel well-informed... A week ago we were asked to read sentences to a story that were randomly placed, and we were given the task of organizing the story. I was so proud of myself for knowing so many words and being able to translate so much Chinese in only one year of learning... I really want to express my appreciation towards my TCLP teacher. She was an incredible teacher who showed me how amazing the Chinese culture is. Because of her, I want to go to China and experience all it has to offer.”

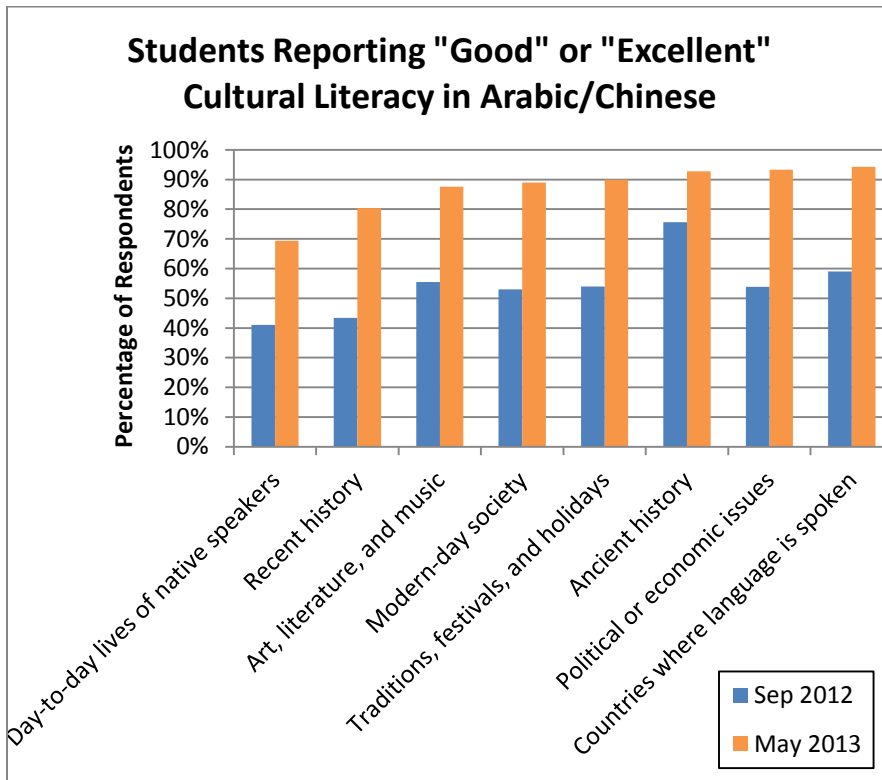
– Female, age 16, Massachusetts

“My TCLP Arabic teacher was an awesome teacher. He made a big impact not only in my education but in my life. He was always there to listen and give advice. I love his mentality and his way of thinking. He's always trying to encourage you in every way possible. He made me want to pursue my education even more and treat others with respect... I will be taking Arabic next year, and I plan to minor in Middle Eastern Studies... I'm glad I had the privilege of meeting my TCLP teacher. It was a pleasure, and I wish he could stay here longer.” – Female, age 17, Arizona

“My child has really enjoyed the teacher, and it sounds like all the students enjoy this class. The teacher has done an excellent job relating to the students and making learning about language and culture fun.”

– Parent of 7-year-old, Wisconsin

future program workshops in order to encourage exchange teachers to build students' cultural fluency in more diverse areas (for full results, see the chart below).



Because students may not always be the best judges of their own academic progress, this year TCLP staff also set out to measure the impact that the program's teachers had on student attitudes towards Arabic and Chinese language learning. At some host schools, students elect to take Arabic or Chinese, while at other schools it is a required class. In the latter case, students are far less likely to be self-motivated learners at the start of the school year. Although TCLP exchange teachers have no say about how students feel about Arabic or Chinese at the beginning of the school year, their actions in the classroom heavily affect how students feel when the school year is over.

American Councils staff sought to measure student satisfaction this year through both direct and indirect means. When asked directly "How satisfied have you been with the TCLP Chinese teacher's class overall this year?" 77% of students answered that they were "very satisfied" (49%) or "satisfied" (28%). Solid majorities of students also reported that they would enjoy being taught by their TCLP teacher again, would recommend their class to others, are more interested in the Arabic- or Chinese-speaking world than before, and enjoyed the language more than in previous years (see the chart at the top of the following page for full details). As students ended the school year with such positive attitudes towards the study of Arabic and Chinese overall, program staff expected to see evidence of corresponding strength in the critical language programs of host schools. The data confirm this expectation: out of the

## What Students Are Saying

My reaction [to having a teacher from Egypt] was nervous and a little excited. I think learning other languages like Arabic is awesome, because you get to meet new people. Arabic is also a great language for kids, because Arabic is fun... I hope to learn about the culture and history... [My teacher] is fun, and when he tells us to learn, we actually learn, because he makes Arabic easy.

– Female, age 9, Illinois

"As an Asian American student, I actually felt more proud of my culture and the class made me more interested in learning about the Chinese culture and language and also my own language, because it's so interesting. [Our field trip] to the Chinese museum was so interesting and made me question how these Chinese people were so talented... I would be so interested in learning Chinese in college. I'm going to miss my Chinese teacher so much and look forward to the new one coming in my senior year!

– Male, age 17, Massachusetts

"[My most memorable experience has been] the cross-cultural experience with the teacher. She has been invited to our home for dinner and has learned American customs very well. She has tried to share her customs as well with us....very rewarding."

– Parent of 15-year-old, Michigan

I love Arabic; it's one of the best parts of my day. [My teacher] is great... I hope to continue studying Arabic next year, then continue in college. A job relating to Arabic would be awesome.

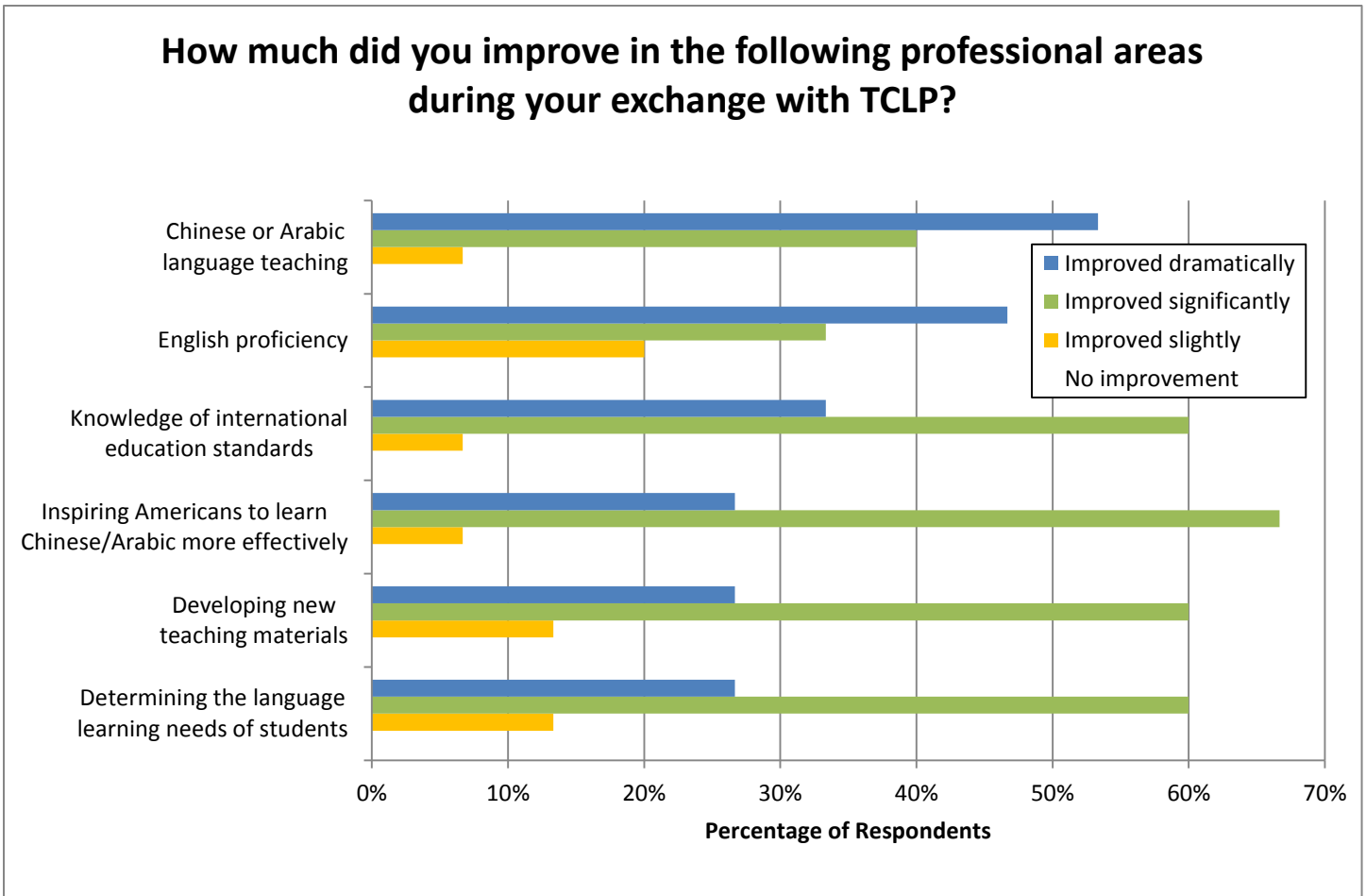
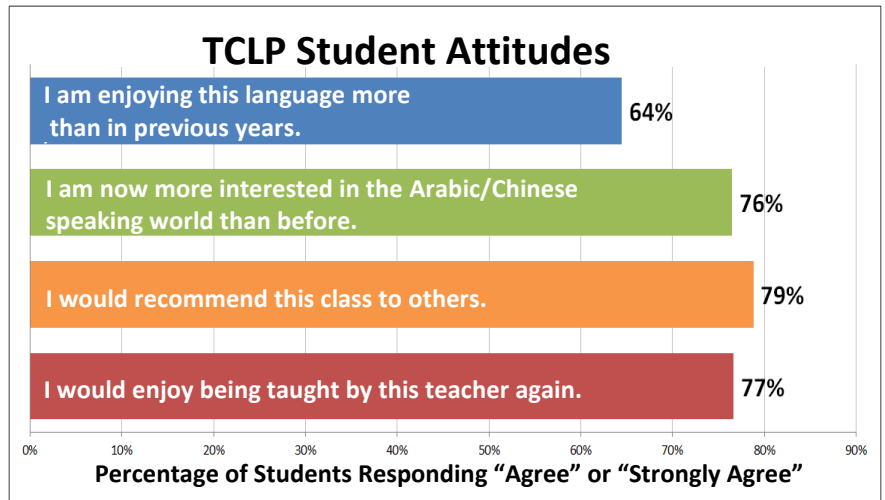
– Male, age 17, Montana

exchange teachers who took TCLP’s post-program survey, 83% said that their host school was planning to hire a full-time Arabic or Chinese language teacher for the next school year (excluding three teachers who did not know).

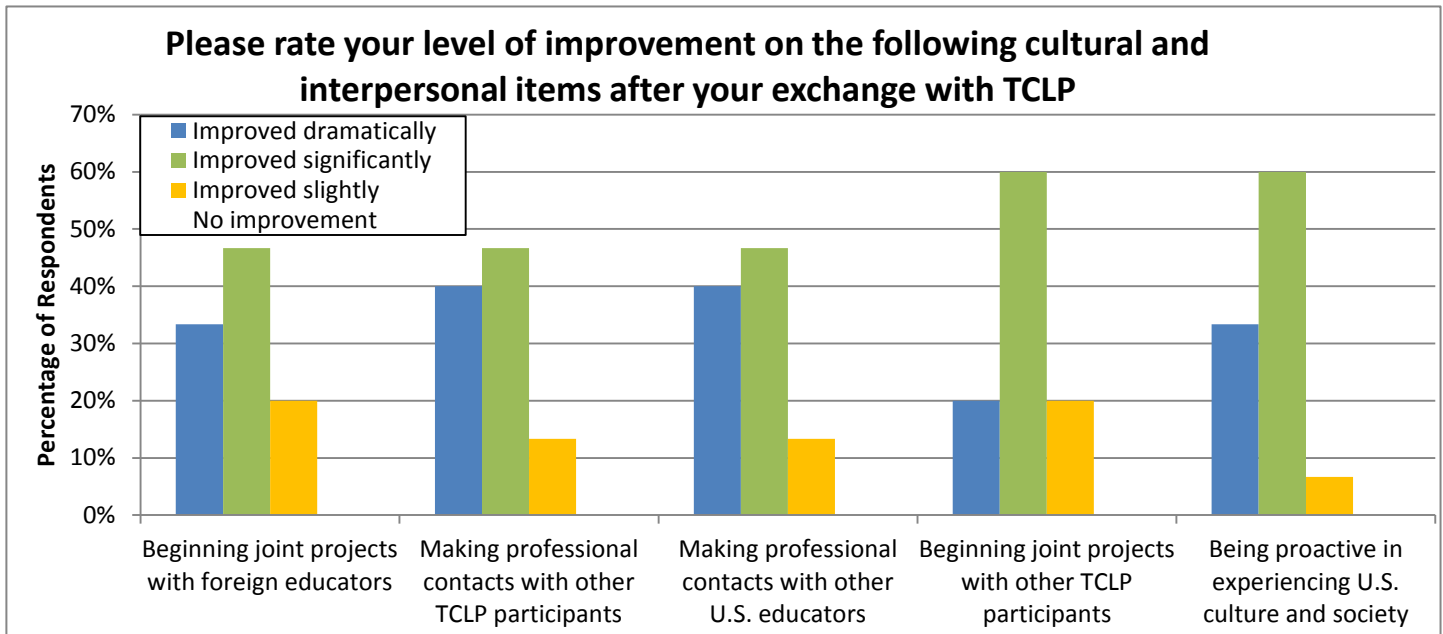
Students and language programs were not the only beneficiaries of TCLP; the post-program survey for exchange teachers (completed by 15 out of 23 participants) asked them whether they had improved slightly, significantly, dramatically, or not at

all in 25 professional skills related to K-12 language teaching in the United States. A majority of exchange teacher respondents improved dramatically or significantly in 23 out of 25 areas covered, and a remarkable 87% of exchange teacher respondents improved in all 25 skill sets. Areas of notable improvement included overall Chinese and Arabic language teaching, English language proficiency, knowledge of international education standards, inspiring Americans to learn Chinese and Arabic more effectively, developing original teaching materials, and determining the language learning needs of students (see the chart below for detailed results).

Outside the skills that are directly relevant to teaching critical languages, exchange teachers also reported growth in cultural and interpersonal areas. Fourteen out of fifteen teachers surveyed reported being more self-confident, self-reliant, and internationally-minded by the end of their exchange, and every respondent said that upon returning to their home countries, they were likely to take the lead on implementing more globally-focused activities in their classroom,



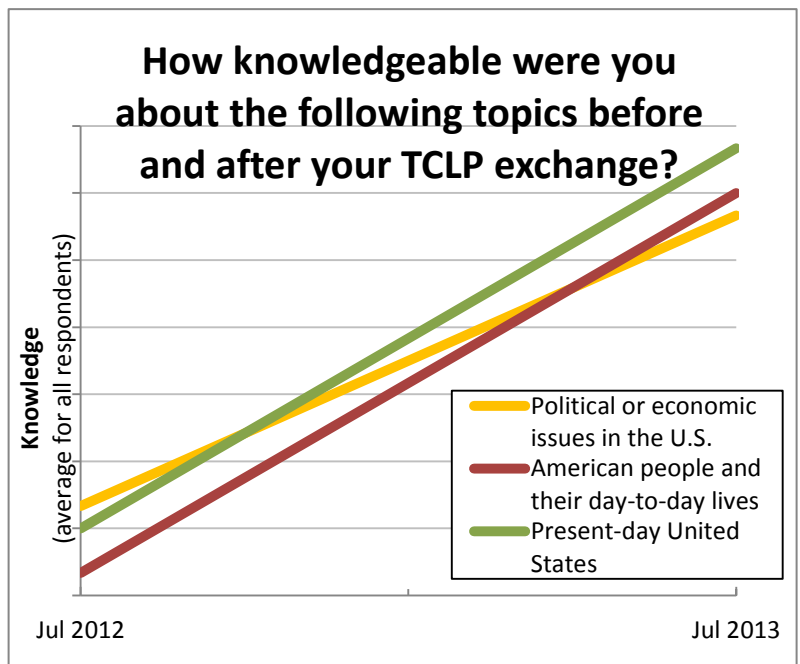
school, and community. Every exchange teacher surveyed said they had improved their networking skills and willingness to be proactive in experiencing U.S. culture and society (see chart below).



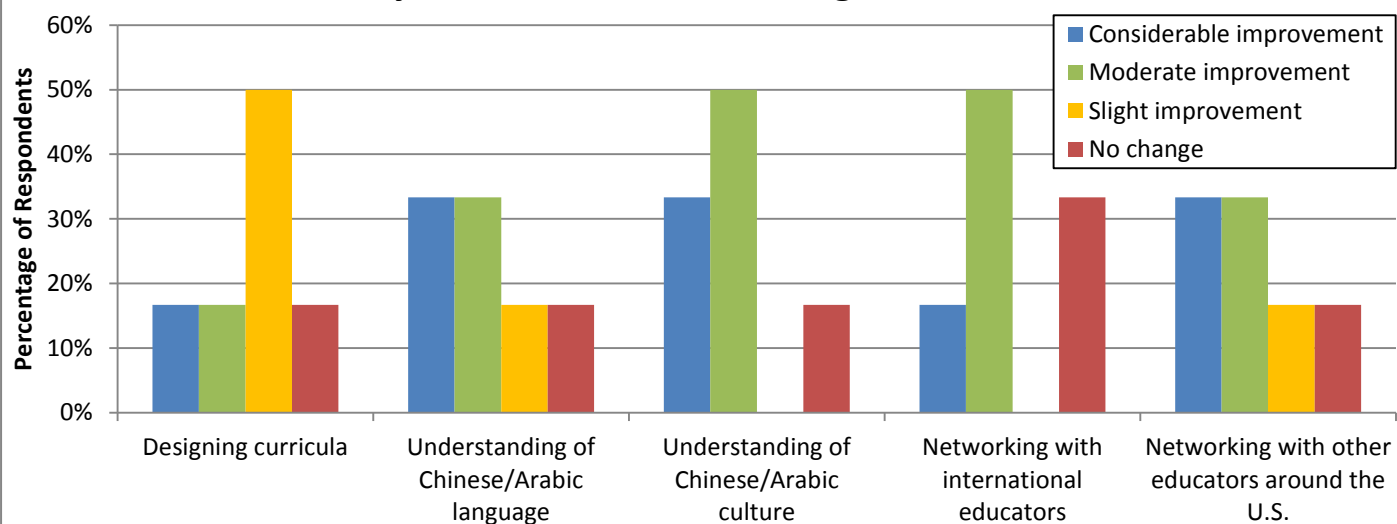
Of equal significance is the knowledge of American culture that international TCLP participants gained during their year in the U.S. Respondents reported that before their exchange, on average they knew the most about U.S. holidays and political or economic issues, relatively shallow areas that are reported upon routinely in foreign media. However, by the end of the program, teachers indicated that their knowledge of American people and the present-day United States – areas of knowledge that can only be gained by experiencing life in the U.S. first-hand – had exceeded political and economic knowledge overall (see the chart at bottom-right). This evolution in understanding points to the value of teacher exchanges on the whole. TCLP participants bring back the knowledge they have gained from their relationships in the U.S. and use their “great homestay experience”, “the surprise party my eight-graders held for me”, and “the ride offered to me by an 85-year-old lady in my neighborhood” (all actual experiences of 2012 TCLP teachers) to better educate students about the United States and counter popular stereotypes.

American Councils staff also used participant feedback surveys to evaluate whether TCLP is accomplishing its greater mission. All 15 exchange teachers who took the post-program survey said that their experience helped them to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the U.S. and their home country (China or Egypt). Respondents were unanimous that TCLP had helped them to promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement. One-hundred percent of exchange teachers confirmed that their participation had helped them strengthen ties between the people of the United States with people of other countries.

Mentor teachers who completed a post-program survey also claimed to have grown through TCLP, particularly improving their networking with fellow educators and understanding of a different culture (see chart at top of next page). Specific participant remarks can also be found on the following page.



## As a result of your relationship with the exchange teacher, how were your skills in the following areas affected?



### What Teachers Are Saying

I feel that this single year in the US added more than 5 years to my experience as a teacher and 10 years of practice as a language learner and teacher. I learned a lot from comparing the two educational systems and from professional development in the U.S. My plan is to apply everything I've learned in the first year [back] in my classroom, and then prepare some professional development for teachers in my home school. If the outcome is good, I will widen the experience to the whole school district. – **2012 Exchange Teacher**

Our TCLP exchange teacher contributed a great deal to our language program. She not only built up our program structurally in terms of language and grammar but opened up the minds of our students and community to a new and important culture. She enriched the lives of all she touched in many ways. – **2012 Mentor Teacher**

I would say there are more students in my classes who want to go to China after learning Mandarin, Chinese culture, and Chinese language. Most of my students have done a very, very good job learning Mandarin. I am extremely happy and proud of their progress and their enthusiasm about this subject. – **2012 Exchange Teacher**

The time I have spent as a mentor teacher with TCLP has been invaluable. I am much more cognizant of cultural differences and constantly share my experiences with others whenever I have the chance. I present locally, regionally and nationally on the topic of TCLP and the advantages of having exchange teachers. As with our past teachers, we will stay in touch via email. We hope to do more class exchanges via Skype. Our big dream is to create some sort of relationship that will allow an travel exchange program. – **2012 Mentor Teacher**

I think the Arabic program at my school is very good and it will gain more students next year. The interest that I saw in my students eyes during learning Arabic last year was a great evidence. – **2012 Exchange Teacher**

Having to work and communicate with someone from a different culture has made me a better educator. In the U.S., we interact with people from various cultures. It takes understanding and open-mindedness to do this well. Having to work so closely with our exchange teacher has really helped me improve in this area. What was especially helpful was that everyone at American Councils was able to answer questions regardless of whether or not he or she was the official contact person. – **2012 Mentor Teacher**