

# Teachers of Critical Languages Program 2019-2020 Year in Review

## Overview

At the conclusion of the 2019-2020 school year, TCLP staff calculated statistics from all teachers over the course of their year-long exchange in order to gauge the impact of the program as a whole across all levels and geographies. Monitoring and evaluation data came from monthly exchange teacher surveys, as well as post-program surveys that were distributed to teachers, students, and parents. The resulting information provides valuable insight into the individual experiences of students studying Arabic and Chinese. These statistics are used to measure the impact of the 2019-2020 teachers and to make informed decisions about monitoring and evaluation of TCLP for future years.

As a result of participating in TCLP this year, does your school have increased motivation to further develop its Arabic/Chinese language program?

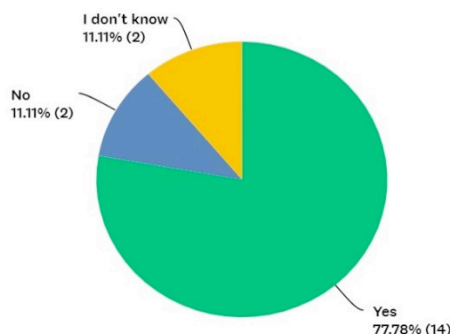


Figure 1

Collectively, the 2019 cohort of exchange teachers taught over 4,328 students in their classes. This year's teachers garnered an impressive 1,879 hours of professional development and participated in a total of 1,736 hours of outreach in their respective communities and schools, reaching out to community members and building bridges of mutual understanding.

The feedback received from host schools was overwhelmingly positive. In addition to paving the way for the expansion of K-12 critical language programs in schools, TCLP is also making a tremendous difference in the lives of its U.S., Chinese, Egyptian, and Moroccan participants. 2019-2020 TCLP mentor teachers completed a post-program survey, in which they provided substantial evidence that TCLP is enabling many schools to expand their Arabic and Chinese language programs in long-term, sustainable ways. Of the mentor teachers surveyed, more than three-quarters said their school has increased motivation to develop its Arabic or Chinese language program as a result of participating in TCLP (Figure 1). Many schools followed up their intentions with action; over half of mentors reported that their schools will continue offering the same number or more Arabic/Chinese classes next year (Figure 2). For many schools, 2019 was the first year of their Arabic/Chinese program and a critical period in which success was far from certain. These figures emphasize

Will your school continue to offer classes in Arabic/Chinese next year?

TCLP's effectiveness at achieving its primary goal to increase the teaching and learning of critical languages in K-12 schools across the country.

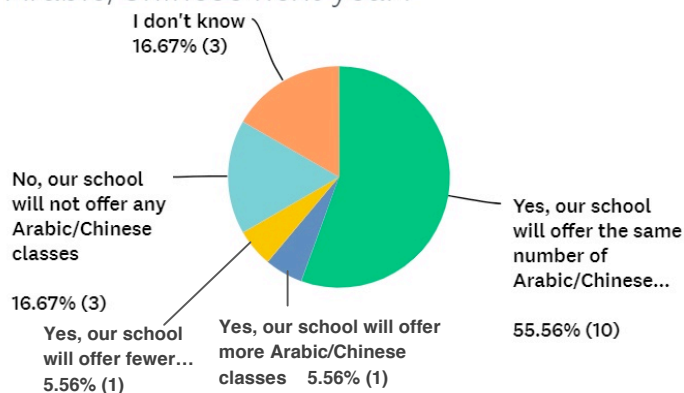


Figure 2

Finally, in order to evaluate the sustainability of the 2019 program year, mentors were asked how many new students they anticipated enrolling in 2020 Arabic/Chinese classes as a result of the school's year with TCLP. Host schools expected to enroll on average 48 new students in Arabic or Chinese next year thanks to TCLP. In other words, almost as many students will benefit from TCLP the year *after* the exchange as during the program year itself.

# Student Feedback

In a separate survey given in May 2020, students rated their Arabic and Chinese abilities in the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) at the beginning and end of the year with TCLP. Students reported dramatic gains in their command of the target languages across all areas, which suggest high teacher effectiveness (Figure 3).

Students also self-reported their understanding of various areas of Chinese, Egyptian, and Moroccan culture. The survey revealed a relatively low baseline at the beginning of the year, with most first-year language students saying they knew “nothing or almost nothing” about areas of Arabic and Chinese culture. Students reported that the biggest jump in their knowledge at the end of the year was of traditions, festivals, and holidays; countries where Arabic and Chinese are spoken; and art, literature, and music (Figure 4).

Students self-reporting "good" or "excellent" language abilities before and after TCLP

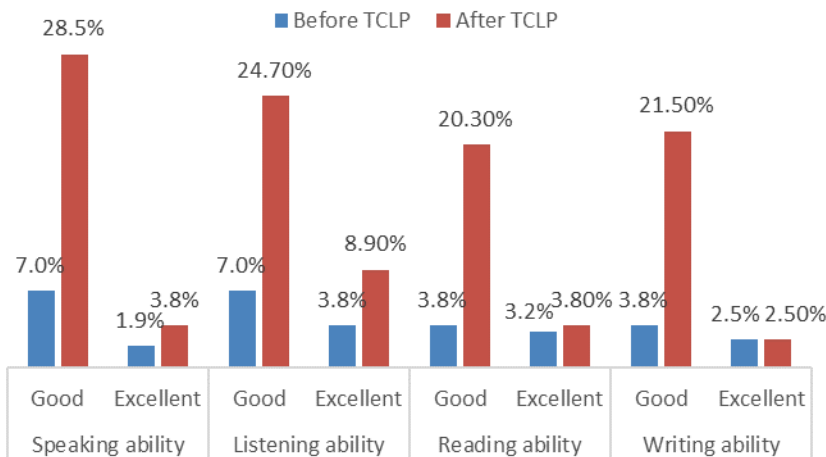


Figure 3

Students self-reporting "a lot" of cultural knowledge before and after TCLP

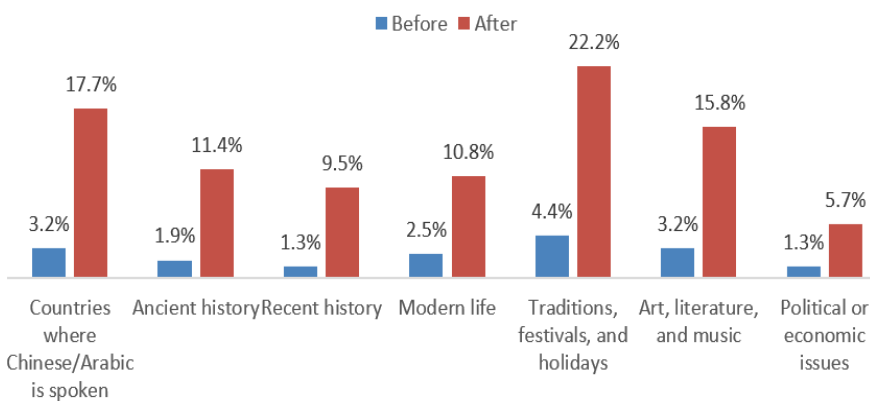


Figure 4

## Student and Parent Perspectives

**“I learned a lot about Chinese culture, not just the Chinese language. I feel that there are differences learning from a native speaker than from a textbook. We also learned about the various regions and what education is like in China.”**

–10<sup>th</sup> grade student, RI

**“Given that the school year finished with remote learning due to COVID-19, I was impressed by the remote lessons recorded for the students, and my daughter enjoyed making some of the crafts associated with learning about Ramadan and feelings in Arabic.”**

–Parent of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student, MT

**“It’s been a positive experience interacting with a native Mandarin speaker and Chinese citizen who can share direct experience living in China, her language, culture, history, and correct pronunciation with the children!”**

–Parent of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student, NY

**“I really enjoyed hearing stories about where my Arabic teacher came from and stories about her family. I feel like having a teacher that comes from an Arabic-speaking country helps students because the teacher can answer questions they have about the culture.”**

–7<sup>th</sup> grade student, MA

**“We feel so fortunate to have this program as part of our children's learning curriculum. It gets their minds to think outside the box and exposes them to very different languages and cultures. We hope these courses will be offered at the middle and high school levels so their education in Chinese can continue.”**

–Parent of a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade student, TX

TCLP also evaluated how the exchange teachers affected student attitudes toward language learning, measuring student satisfaction at the end of the school year through both direct and indirect means. When asked how satisfied they were with their TCLP teacher's class overall this year, 56% of students answered that they were "very satisfied" and 30% responded that they were "satisfied" (equating to 85% combined). A large majority of students also reported that their teacher treated all students fairly and respected their viewpoints, cared about their progress, set clear expectations, was well-prepared, and stimulated their interest in Chinese/Arabic (Figure 5).

Percentage of students reporting "strongly agree" and "agree" to the following statements

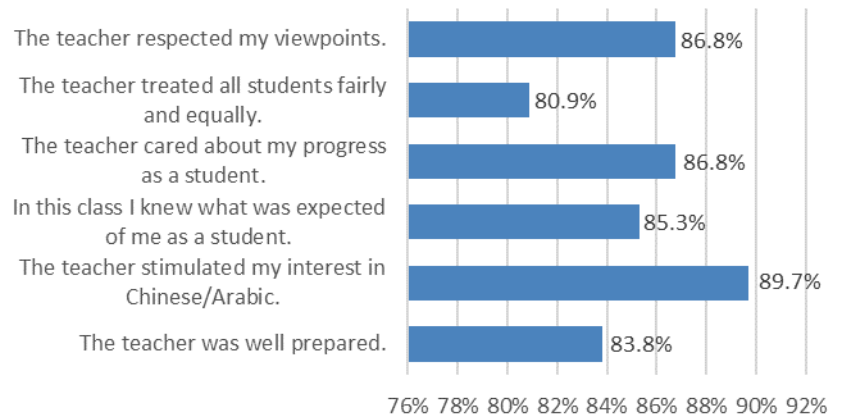


Figure 5

## Exchange Teacher Feedback

Exchange teachers' self-reported growth in skills

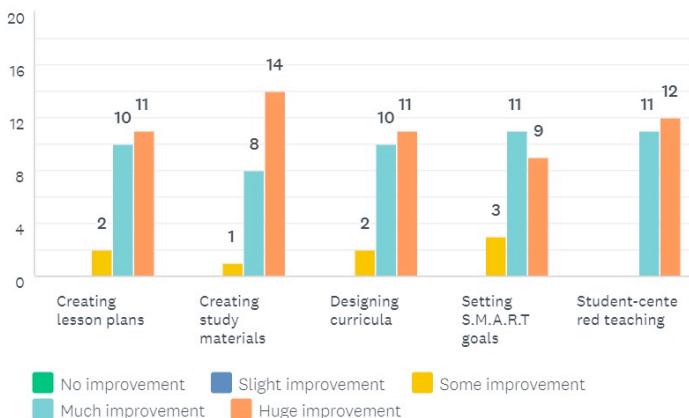


Figure 6

"As a result of TCLP, I am more..."

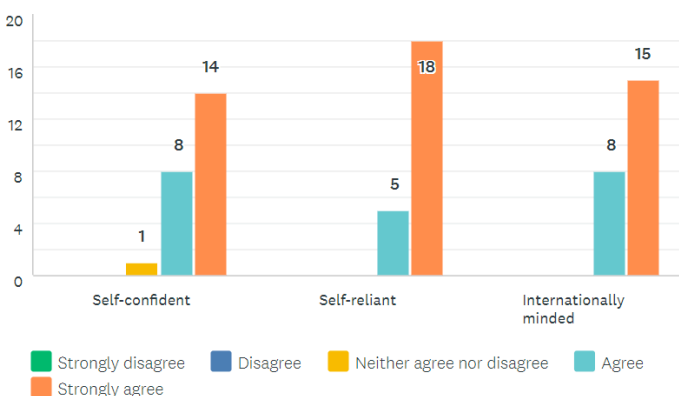


Figure 7

As students ended the school year with positive attitudes toward the study of Arabic and Chinese overall, there was a corresponding confidence among exchange teachers that their host schools' critical language programs would continue. Additionally, more than two-thirds of exchange teachers have worked on developing a curriculum that their host school will be able to use in future years.

In developing or expanding language programs at their host schools, exchange teachers simultaneously experienced significant gains in their language teaching abilities. All 23 responding exchange teachers reported at least some improvement in the following areas: creating lesson plans, creating study materials, designing curricula, setting S.M.A.R.T. goals, and student-centered teaching (Figure 6). Most notably, 96% of TCLP teachers noted much improvement or huge improvement in their overall language teaching skills.

In addition to skills that are directly related to foreign language instruction, exchange teachers reported an improvement in cross-cultural and interpersonal knowledge. Out of the 23 responding exchange teachers, the vast majority agreed that their participation in TCLP resulted in higher degrees of self-confidence. All responding teachers maintained that they are more self-reliant and internationally-minded as a result of the program (Figure 7).

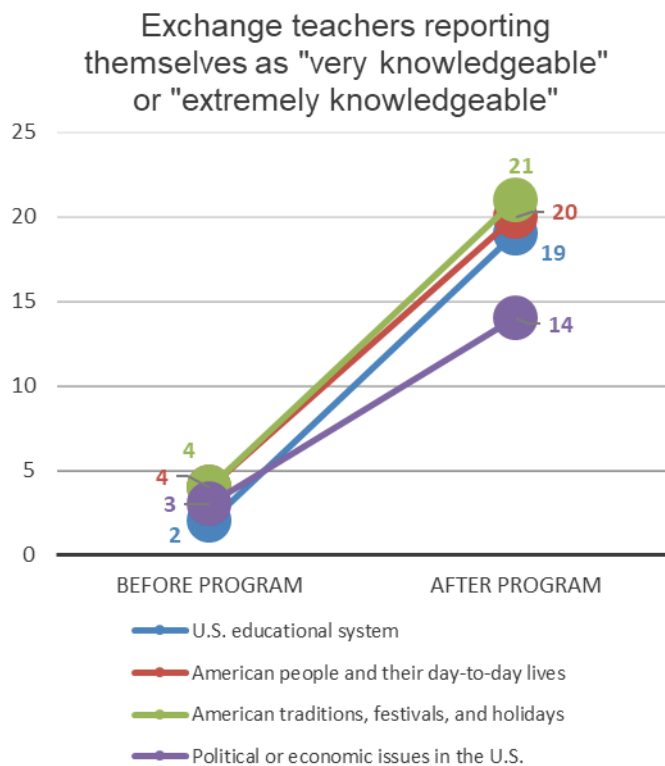


Figure 8

International participants additionally reported that their understanding of American culture improved as a result of living and working in the U.S. (Figure 8). Only four respondents qualified themselves as very knowledgeable or extremely knowledgeable about American people and their daily lives at the beginning of the program. By the end of TCLP, 20 teachers qualified themselves as very or extremely knowledgeable in this area.

This increase is particularly significant when considered alongside data collected on participants' post-program plans. All teachers surveyed indicated that they are likely to implement more globally-focused activities in their home classrooms, schools, and communities. Thirteen teachers expressed an interest in developing a sister-school relationship with an American school after returning to their home countries. This speaks to the enduring value that exists in teacher exchanges; specifically, that the program's conclusion does not result in the end of the cultural exchange. Participants are able to apply their experiences in the U.S. to their teaching at home to educate students and colleagues about the United States.

## Exchange Teachers Share Their Future Plans

**"My TCLP experience has helped me improve and grow professionally and personally. I acquired new teaching techniques and learned new methods in classroom management and teacher-student relationship building. I believe that this experience should be shared with my colleagues and my students back home. Organizing workshops, training, or even classroom visits or invitations to attend my classes would be a good idea. The organization of cultural events that include online participation of students from the U.S. will also be valuable."**

– Arabic Exchange Teacher

**"This productive year has broadened my horizons and made me more proactive. During the first year, I am going to incorporate what I learned into my classroom to make it more student-centered and help students' long-term growth. Over the next 5 years I am going to spread the idea to my colleagues. Hope we all can benefit from the exchange."**

– Chinese Exchange Teacher

**"Through my work experience in American schools, I have a deeper understanding of the importance of being a language teacher. In language teaching, I have more experience on how to stimulate students' interest. The work culture of [my host school] is also very inspiring to me, which is also helpful for my work after returning to China."**

– Chinese Exchange Teacher



American Councils staff also used participant feedback surveys to determine whether TCLP is accomplishing its greater mission. All 23 responding exchange teachers felt that their exchange helped them assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the U.S. and their home countries, promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement, and strengthen ties between the people of the United States with people of other countries. At least 22 of the 23 respondents said that their participation in the program made dramatic or significant contributions toward these program goals (Figure 9).

Mentor teachers from U.S. host schools similarly experienced personal and professional development as a result of taking part in TCLP. The most notable achievements mentor teachers shared include increased understanding of a different language and culture, as well as increased opportunities to network with international and U.S. educators.

One mentor teacher reported: “I believe I opened up communication with faculty and outside community members in the benefits of learning about another culture. I teach intercultural communication, but I feel I have a better understanding and can give clearer examples to the students. I can also discuss my learning experience with students. I have seen that our students are capable of learning a new language and are more open to other cultures than I initially realized.”

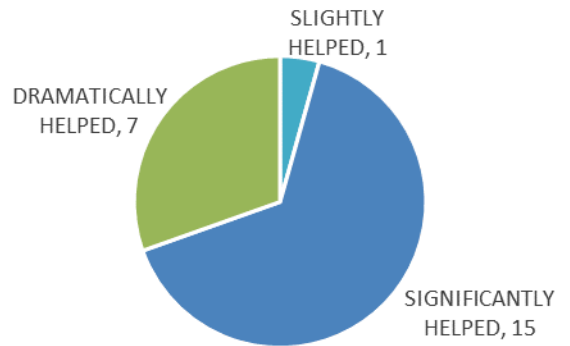
Some U.S. teachers who served as mentors in the program also noticed positive impacts in areas beyond those traditionally associated with international exchange, including setting performance targets (Figure 10).

“I feel that I benefited also on a personal level by developing a great friendship with the exchange teacher. Professionally, I have felt more than ever a renewed joy for teaching a language,” said one respondent of their experience.

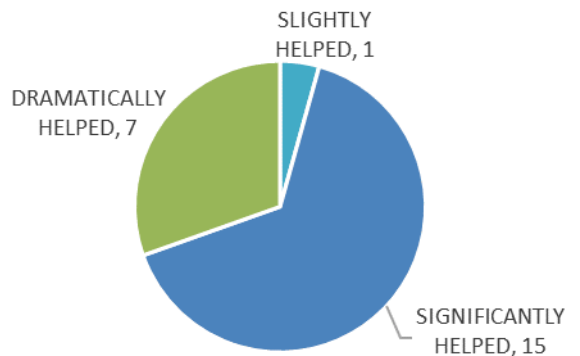
Additional remarks about TCLP from exchange teachers and mentor teachers are included on the following page.

**“To what extent do you think your experience helped you to...”**

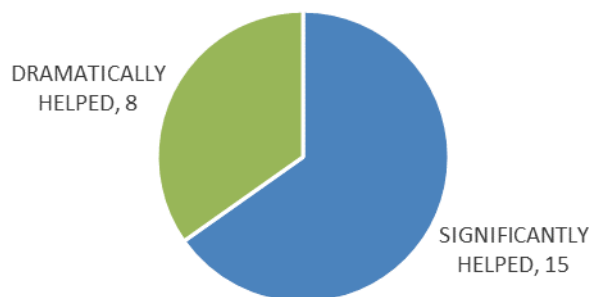
Assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the U.S. and your home country?



Promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement?



Strengthen ties which unite people of the United States with people of other countries?



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

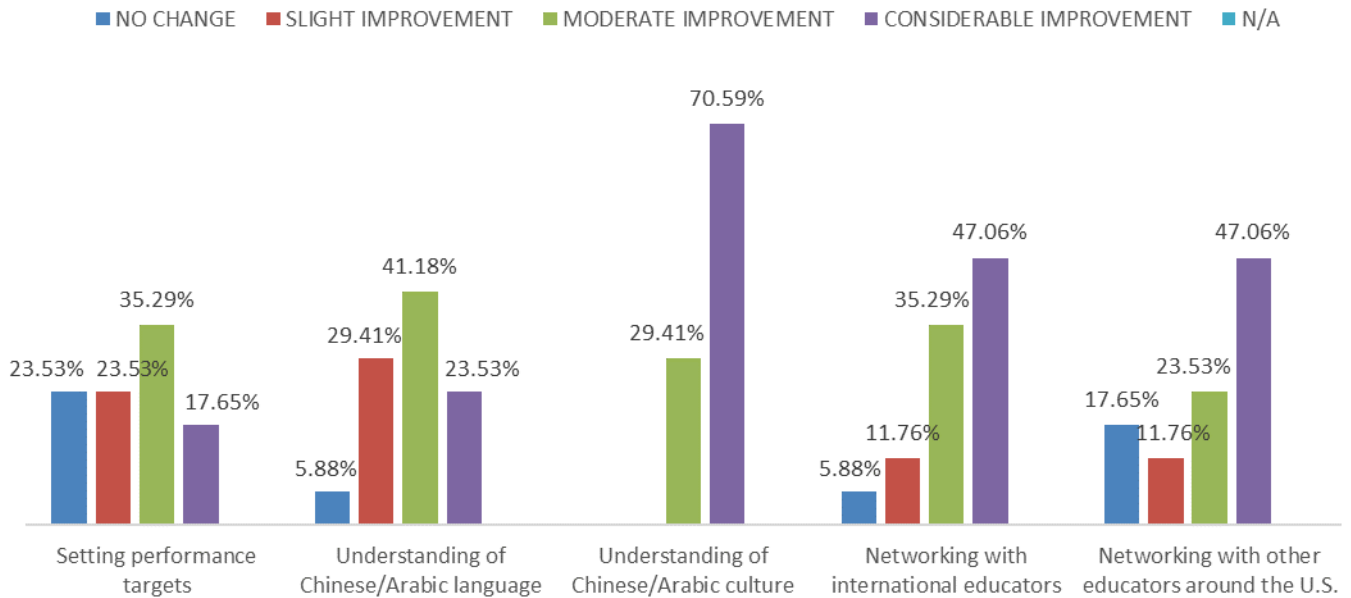


Figure 10

## Feedback from TCLP Exchange Teachers and Mentor Teachers

**“It has helped enhance the overall comprehensive learning experience of our students. In addition, it has also motivated our students to expand their horizon and their goals in life by acquiring one of the most challenging languages in the world.”** – TCLP Mentor Teacher

**“I'm so grateful to TCLP for giving me this chance to learn some useful teaching pedagogies and methods as a Chinese exchange teacher. I'm also grateful to the staff for caring for us and giving us the greatest support in our work and life.”** – TCLP Exchange Teacher

**“She was able to establish and develop our district's first Mandarin program. Additionally, with her outreach, she was able to expose kindergarten through 4th grade students as well, essentially having all students in the district exposed to Mandarin. The work she put in with the Spanish teachers also furthered their teaching practices, strengthening the entire foreign language program”** – TCLP Mentor Teacher

**“Our exchange teacher brought the first-ever Arabic language program to our school with great success. She was very effective in networking with teachers, staff, and community members. The students were very involved in various outreach activities and represented the program in school and community events.”**  
– TCLP Mentor Teacher

**“I want to thank the Department of State and American Councils, represented by the TCLP staff for this wonderful program and for giving us this opportunity to broaden our knowledge and create bonds with new people. I am also so grateful for all the support I received during my stay in the US while taking part in this program.”** – TCLP Exchange Teacher