

Teachers of Critical Languages Program 2023-2024 Year in Review

Overview

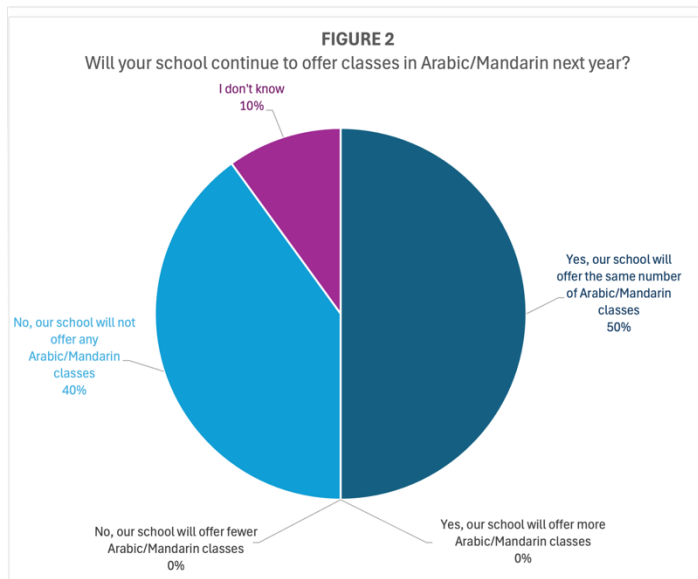
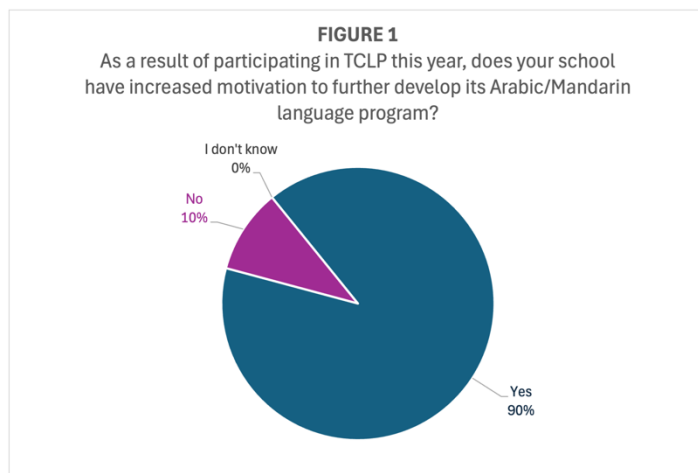
At the conclusion of the 2023-2024 school year, TCLP staff calculated statistics from all teachers over the course of their year-long exchange in order to gauge the impact of the program as a whole across all levels and geographies. Monitoring and evaluation data came from monthly exchange teacher surveys, 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 Mandarin. These statistics are used to measure the impact of the 2023-2024 teachers and to make informed decisions about monitoring and evaluation of TCLP for future years.

Collectively, during their exchange year, the 2023-2024 cohort directly taught over 3,631 students, while indirectly reaching to over 36,957 students and community members during the outreach hours. In addition to teaching, the group collectively completed over 1,914 hours of outreach directed at teachers, parents, and community members across the U.S. In addition, they also garnered over 3,051 hours of participation in professional development events.

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., Taiwan, China, Egypt, and Morocco participants. 2023-2024 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 Mandarin language programs in long-term, sustainable ways. Of the mentor teachers surveyed, 90% said their school has increased motivation to develop its Arabic or Mandarin language program as a result of participating in TCLP (Figure 1).

Many schools followed up their intentions with action; half of mentors reported that their schools will continue offering the same number of Arabic/Mandarin classes next year (Figure 2). For many schools, 2023 was the first year of their Arabic/Mandarin program and a critical period in which success was far from certain. These figures emphasize TCLP's effectiveness at achieving its primary goal to increase the teaching and learning of critical languages in K-12 schools across the country.

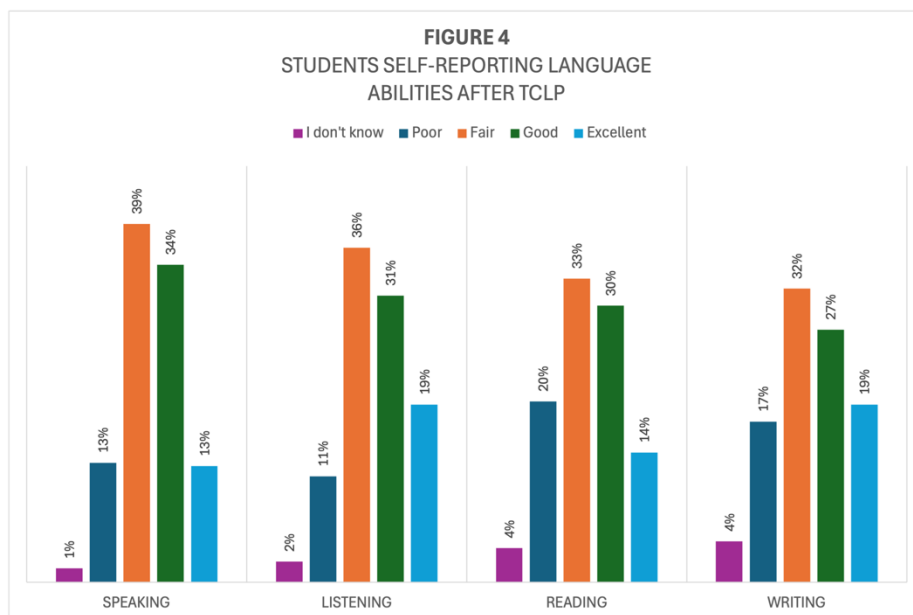
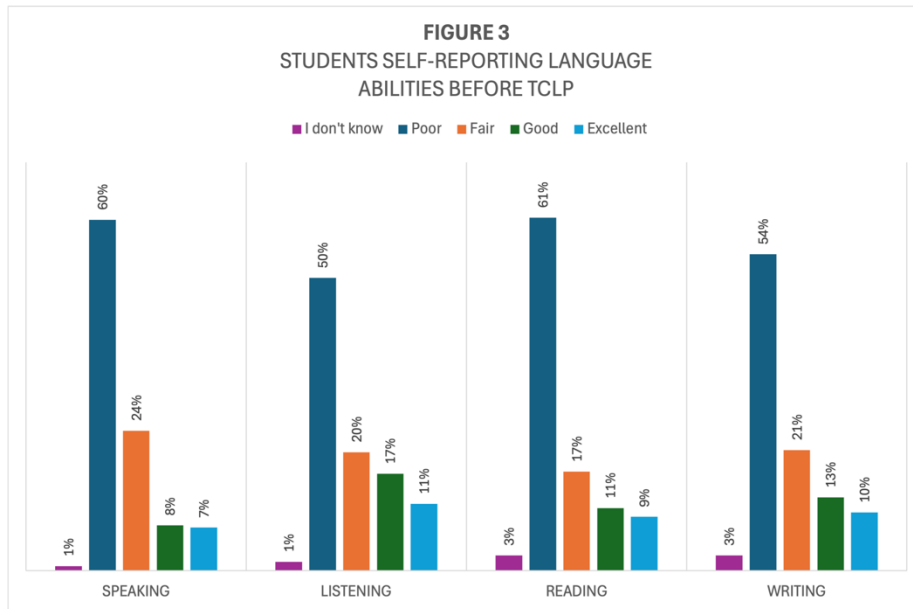
Finally, in order to evaluate the sustainability of the 2023 program year, mentors were asked how many new students they anticipated enrolling in 2024 Arabic/Mandarin classes as a result of the school's year with TCLP.



Each host school expected to enroll on average 27.5 new students in Arabic or Mandarin next year thanks to TCLP. In other words, 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 2024, students rated their Arabic and Mandarin 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 suggests high teacher effectiveness compared to their language abilities before the program (Figures 3 & 4).



Student Perspectives

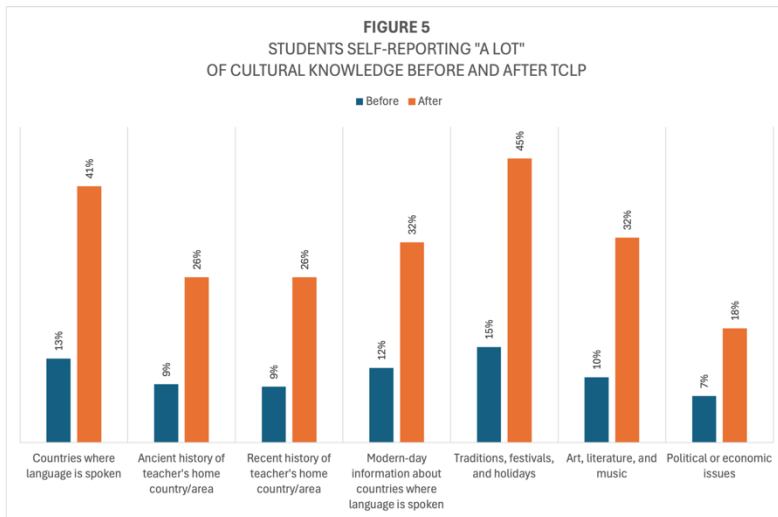
"It has personally impacted my life as I have been able to have a glimpse into cultures that were before unfamiliar with me, and I now feel as if I am able to form a connection with these cultures as I learn more about them." -Grade 9, PA

"[TCLP has] given both my daughters an extra, valuable viewpoint on the world! They got great insights into how things are the same and different across cultures." -Grade 3 student's parent, DC

"Taking an Arabic class has impacted me by getting me out of my comfort zone and learning a new language." -Grade 9, NY

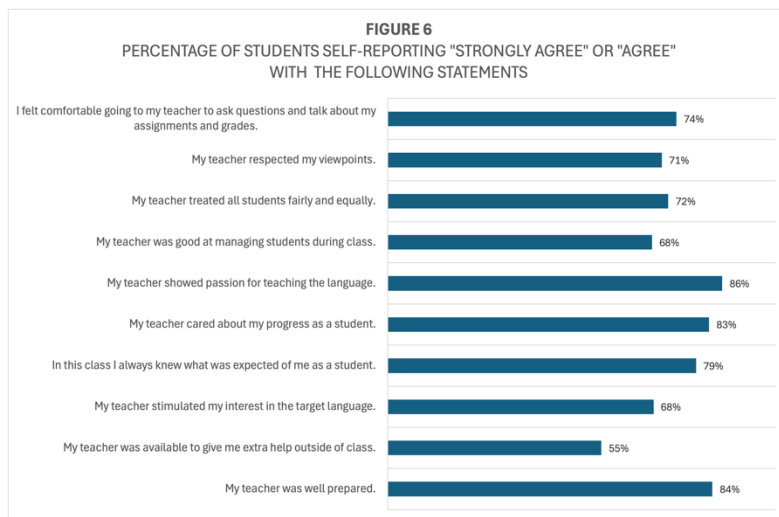
"I now know that it's very important to meet new people from different parts of the world because it has made me a more open-minded person." -Grade 7, WI

"It has made me view the Mandarin speaking culture differently through my perspective" -Grade 8, NC



Students also self-reported their understanding of various areas of culture of their TCLP teacher's country or area. 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 the culture of the area that their TCLP teacher came from. 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 Mandarin are spoken; and art, literature, and music from Arabic- and Mandarin-speaking countries (Figure 5).

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, 40.23% of students answered that they were "very satisfied" and 34.21% responded that they were "satisfied" (equating to 74.44% combined).

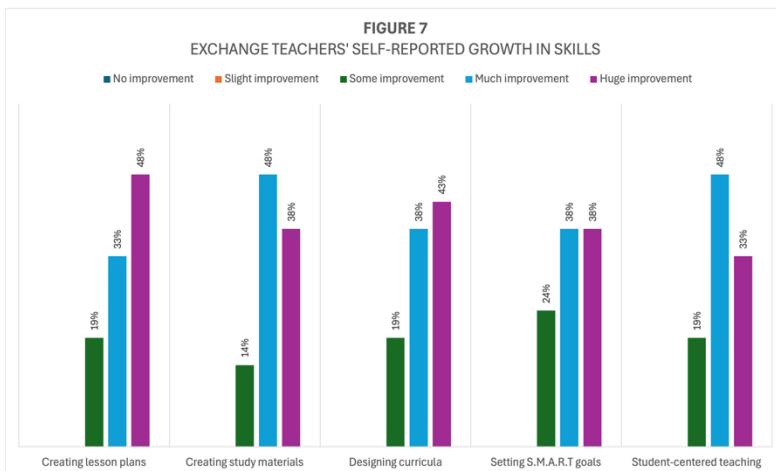


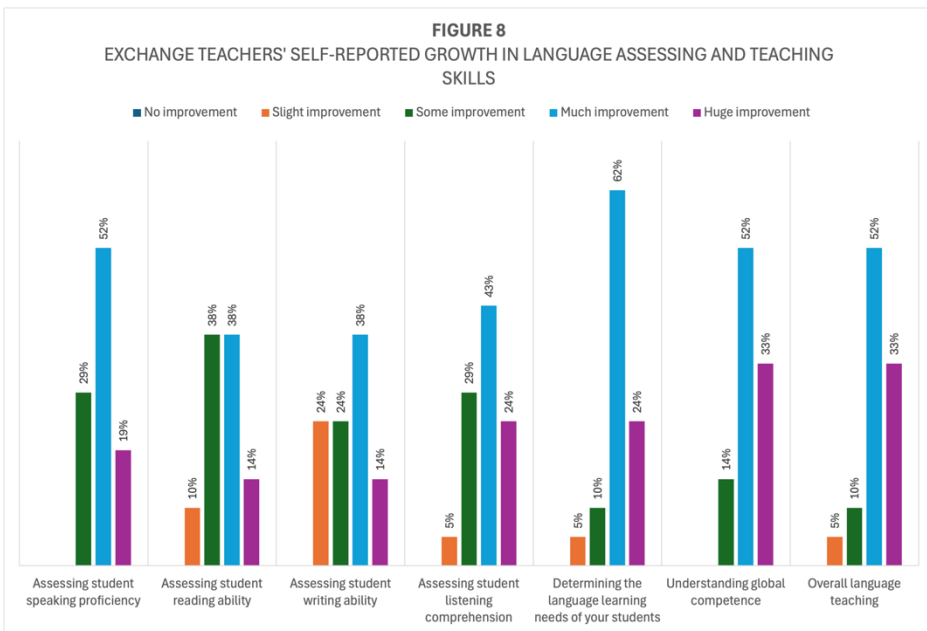
A large majority of students also reported that their teacher treated all students fairly and respected their viewpoints, cared about their progress, set clear expectations, was well prepared, and stimulated their interest in learning Mandarin/Arabic (Figure 6).

Exchange Teacher Feedback

As students ended the school year with positive attitudes toward the study of Arabic and Mandarin overall, there was a corresponding confidence among exchange teachers that their host schools' critical language programs would continue. Additionally, 100% of exchange teachers have worked on developing a curriculum that their host school will be able to use in future years.

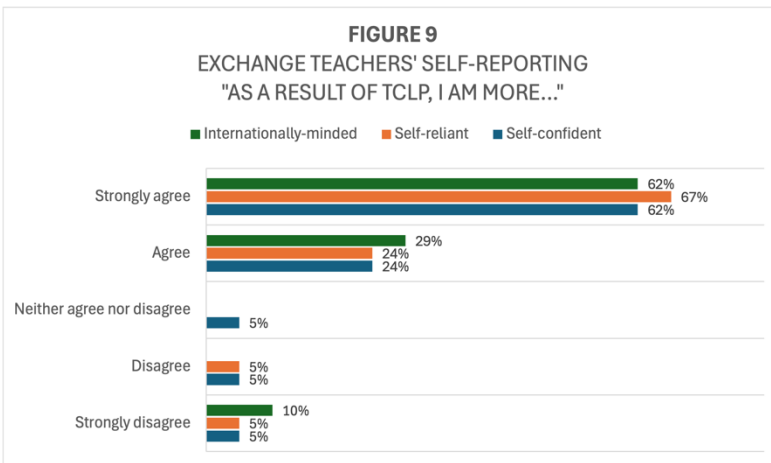
In developing or expanding language programs at their host schools, exchange teachers simultaneously experienced significant gains in their language teaching abilities. All 21 responding exchange teachers reported at least some improvement in the following areas: creating lesson plans, creating study materials, designing curricula, setting S.M.A.R.T. goals, and student-centered teaching (Figure 7).



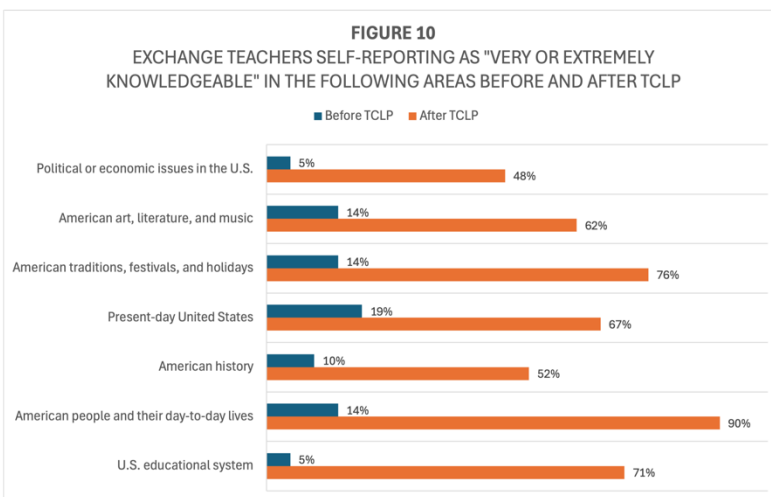


In addition, exchange teachers were asked to report their growth in various areas of language assessment as well as other general language teaching skills. Over half of exchange teachers reported much or huge improvement in their abilities to assess students' speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills. Most notably, 18 of the 21 TCLP teachers (85.71%) noted much improvement or huge improvement in the following areas: determining the language needs of their students, understanding global competence, and their overall language teaching skills (Figure 8).

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 21 exchange teachers, the vast majority agreed that they are more internationally minded, self-reliant and self-confident as a result of the program (Figure 9).

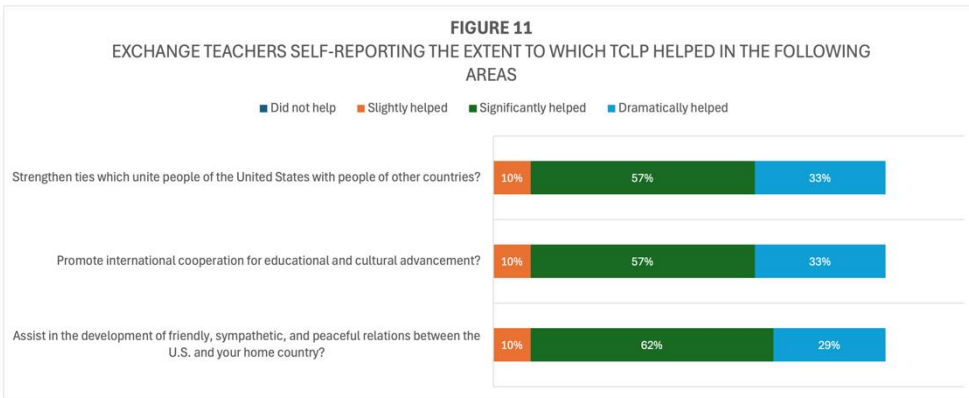


International participants additionally reported that their understanding of U.S. culture improved as a result of living and working in their host communities. Only 3 out of 21 exchange teachers (14.28%) qualified themselves as very knowledgeable or as extremely knowledgeable about U.S. people and their daily lives at the beginning of the program. By the end of TCLP, however, 19 of the 21 teachers (90.48%) qualified themselves as very or extremely knowledgeable in this area (Figure 11).



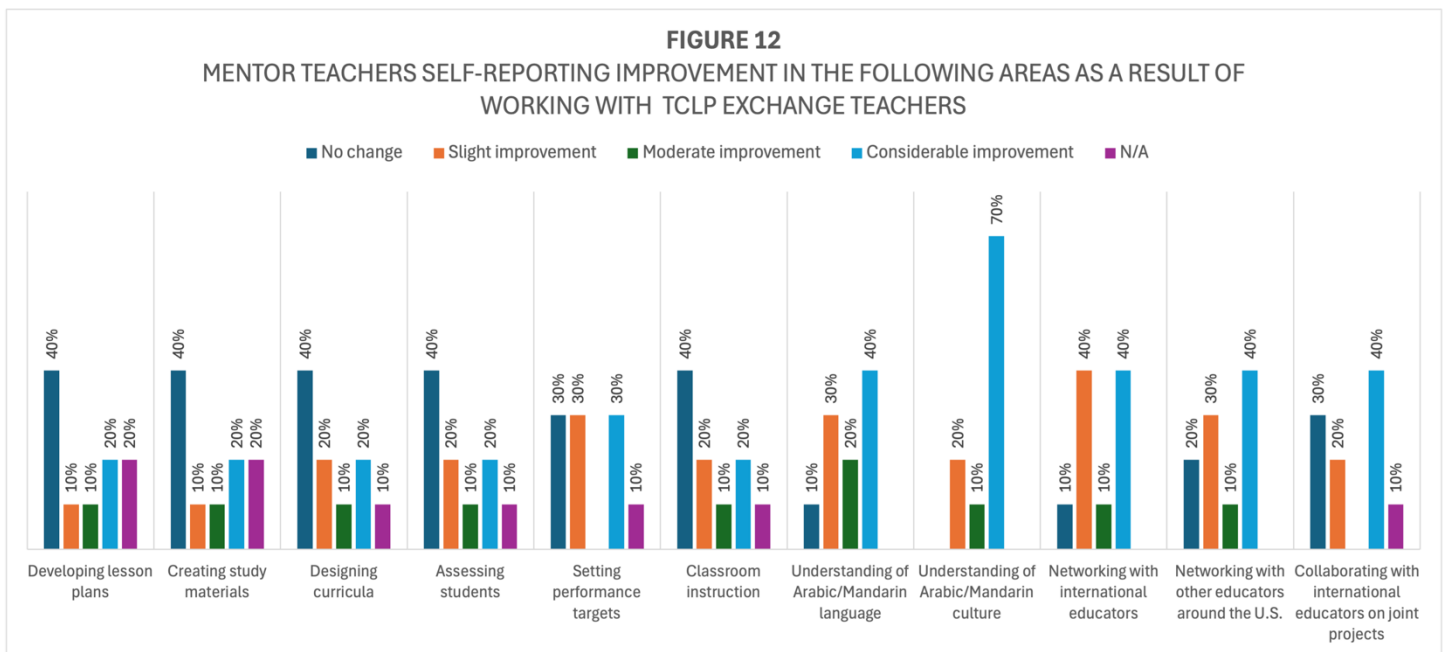
This increase is particularly significant when considered alongside data collected on participants post-program plans. All 21 teachers indicated that they are likely to implement more globally focused activities in their home classrooms, schools, and communities. 13 of the 21 teachers (61.90%) expressed an interest in developing a sister-school relationship with a U.S. 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.

American Councils staff also used participant feedback surveys to determine whether TCLP is accomplishing its greater mission. All 21 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. 19 of the 21 teachers said that their participation in the program made dramatic or significant contributions toward all three of these program goals (Figure 11).



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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. U.S. teachers who served as mentors in the program also noticed increased opportunities to network with international and U.S. educators (Figure 12).



"I've learned many teaching strategies as a TCLP participant in the U.S. When I return to Taiwan, I will introduce the teaching methods to my coworkers and use these teaching strategies in my own classroom. Besides, I will work with the Mandarin teacher in the U.S. to do some language exchange activities with my students in my home country. Hopefully, to expand my students' horizon." -Exchange Teacher

"The exchange teacher helped to build a really solid K - 8th grade curriculum that we can use as a resource for future Mandarin teachers. She also helped us establish a sister school connection between her school and our school's high school, which will have a positive impact on the future of our network's Mandarin programs." -Mentor Teacher