

## Departing Teachers Discuss Achievements

“What was your proudest professional achievement this year?”

This question was posed to the 2012-2013 exchange teachers during their Spring Workshop in Washington DC and the responses ranged from being accepted by their communities, to building a language website for students and parents. Additionally, one element of their experience that many teachers appreciated was the opportunity for professional development inside and outside of their school. “I learned a lot about the American educational system, learning methods about special education/special needs and content,” said one Chinese teacher. Another TCLP teacher was proud of her opportunities to participate in professional development workshops twice a month, where she gained knowledge and skills about learning backwards design, summative development, how to plan units for the whole year, and how to design curriculum and align it with the state standards.

All TCLP teachers are given a total of sixteen days of TCLP professional development workshops throughout the year. In addition to their normal teaching hours and experiences within their school, TCLP exchange teachers collectively engaged in over 1,900 hours of professional development.

The TCLP teachers gained skills and confidence in student-centered teaching methods as they observed their colleagues’ classrooms and attended weekly or monthly PLC and staff meetings at their schools. Monthly survey results collected in Figure 1 show how the TCLP teachers use of traditional teaching methods, including drilling and say-repeat exercises, decreased over the course of the year and these methods were replaced with some methods that were new to the TCLP teachers. These included more engaging and student-centered strategies such as differentiated instruction, rubric assessments, and Total Physical Response (TPR).

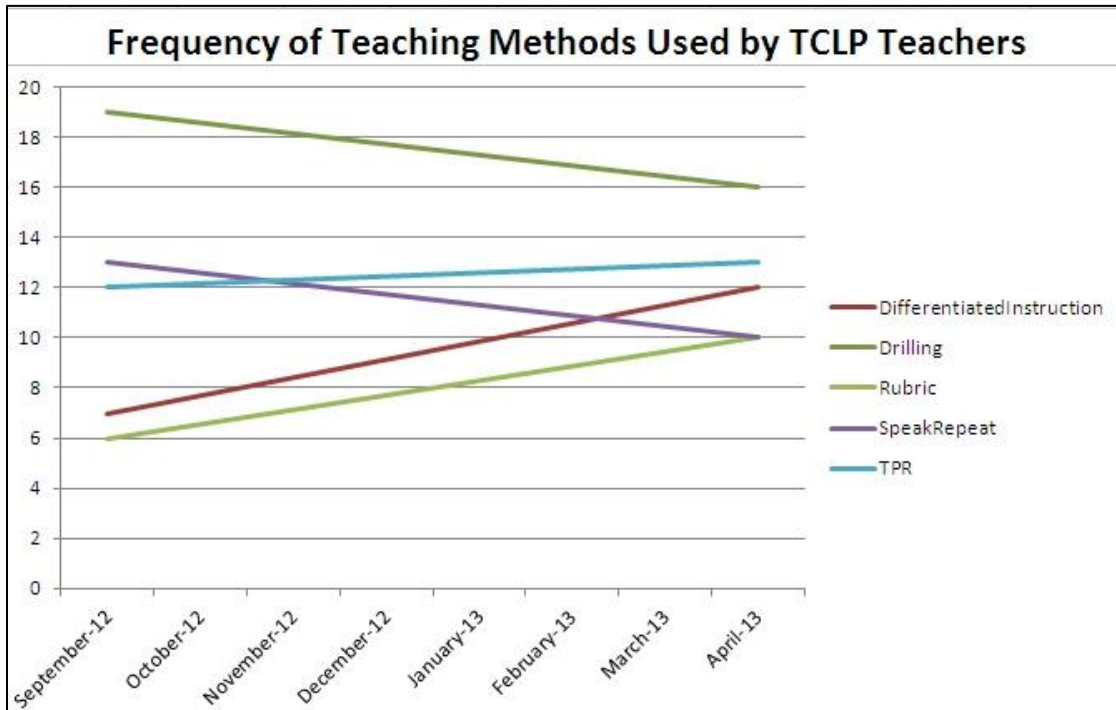


Figure 1

Complementing the use of these new strategies, the mentor teachers who observed the TCLP teachers in their classrooms on a monthly basis also reported an increase in the frequency and comfort level with which exchange teachers implemented student-centered teaching strategies in the classrooms (see Figure 2).

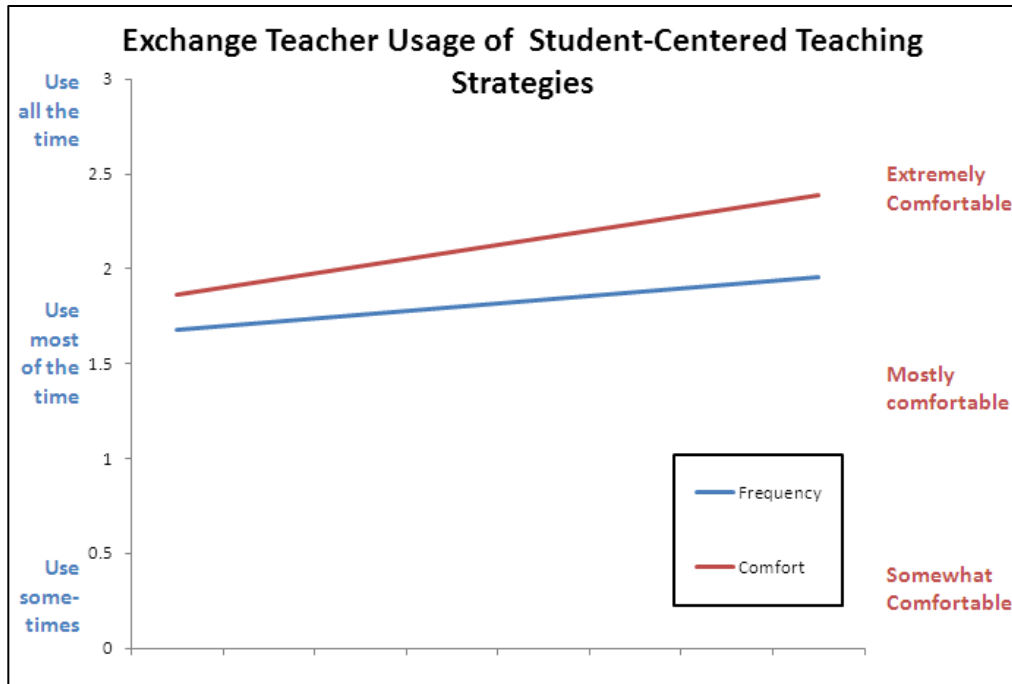


Figure 2

Some teachers took advantage of the chance to attend local and regional conferences that provided information about different U.S. teaching methods. By strengthening their own professional skills, the TCLP teachers became even more effective resources for their American students and communities. Among those who attended conferences this year were:

- Hanan Gawdat (Lehigh, PA) and Marwa Elgezery (New York City, NY) attended Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Conference in Baltimore, MD
- Marwa Elgezery also received a scholarship to attend the Startalk Language Conference for Arabic teachers in Minnesota, MN in June 2013.
- Wang Xiaopei (Minneapolis, MN) and Sheng Wenjuan (Boston, MA) attended the National Conference on the Teaching of Chinese Language, in Boston, MA.
- Yasser Abdelgalil (Chicago, IL) attended the Concordia Language Villages in St. Croix, Minnesota on a scholarship for an Arabic teaching workshop in April.
- Abdelrahman Ibrahim (Tucson, AZ) participated in the Arizona Language Association Conference, and University of Arizona workshops, including sessions about globalizing the classroom through sharing resources
- Sun Ling (Phoenix, AZ) attended the Southwest Conference on Language Teaching in Las Vegas, Nevada.