



EVALUATION OF ECA'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPECIALIST PROGRAM

Evaluation Report

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Commissioned by:

Evaluation Division
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
United States Department of State

Prepared by:

EurekaFacts, LLC



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CALL—computer-assisted language learning

ECA—Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, within the U.S. Department of State

EFL—English as a Foreign Language

Specialist—English Language Specialist

ELT—English language teaching

ESL—English as a Second Language

ESP—English for Specific Purposes

MOE—Ministry of Education

RELO—Regional English Language Officer

TEFL—Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TESL—Teaching English as a Second Language

TESOL—Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

1.0 Introduction

Enhancing English language teaching and learning overseas is central to the mandate of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) to increase understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. English language programming also increases opportunities for collaboration and innovation for American citizens, organizations and businesses overseas, provides academic and professional opportunities to underserved communities abroad, and meets the high demand for English language instruction and guidance around the world.

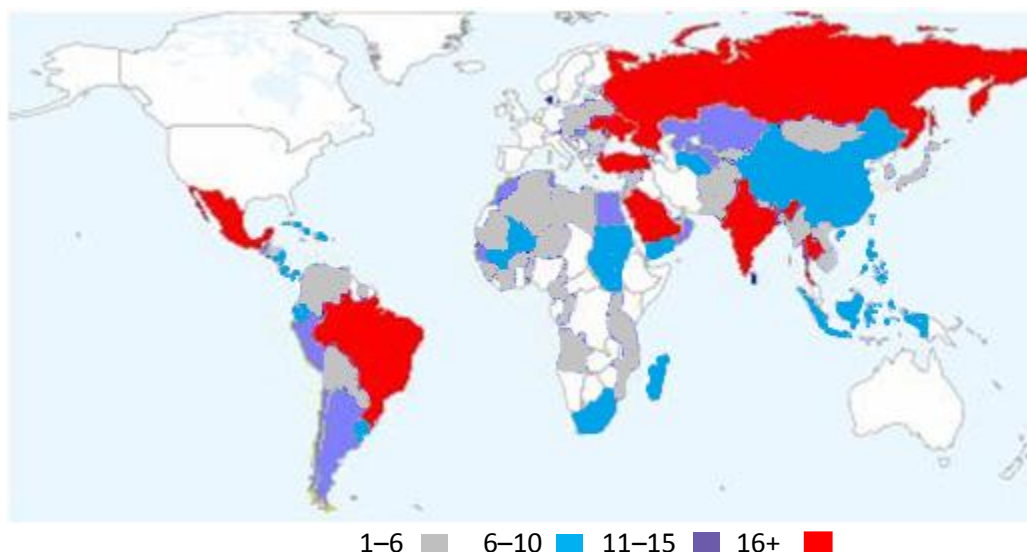
ECA's Office of English Language Programs conducts programming around the world to encourage English language capacity and use among a variety of audiences abroad. One of these programs is ECA's English Language Specialist (Specialist) Program, which recruits U.S. academics and professionals in the fields of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TESOL¹/TEFL) and Applied Linguistics to conduct 2-week to 5-month programs overseas. English Language Specialists assist U.S. embassies in delivering and maintaining quality English language programming, conducting workshops and seminars, speaking at TESOL/TEFL conferences, visiting classrooms, and providing technical language assistance to universities, government entities and many other audiences.

In 2011, the research firm EurekaFacts, LLC, was contracted to conduct an evaluation of the Specialist Program.

1.1 Program Reach

During the period covered by this evaluation (2004–09), more than 250 Specialists participated in approximately 700 assignments in 110 countries around the world.

Figure 1. Numbers of English Language Specialists Placed per Country, 2004–09



¹ TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

1.2 Purpose of the Evaluation

This evaluation sought to assess the effectiveness of the Specialist Program in achieving key ECA and program goals and outcomes. ECA's Evaluation Division developed the following research questions to guide the evaluation:

What is the Specialist Program's impact on English language teaching and learning?

- In what ways have English Language Specialists collaborated with universities, language institutes or other host country institutions?
- What has been the impact of Specialist support in these areas? (curriculum projects, teacher training seminars, textbook/materials development, English for Specific Purposes [ESP],² teaching program evaluation)
- What roles have Specialists played at conferences, workshops, or seminars, and to what effect?
- To what extent did host country instructors³ benefit from the support received from Specialists?
- How have Specialists supported educational, organizational, or institutional development in the host country?
- Have host country instructors applied what they learned from Specialists to improve English language instruction at their home institutions?

What is the Specialist Program's impact on mutual understanding?

- How does the Specialist Program foster mutual understanding and strengthen relations between the United States and its citizens, and other countries and their citizens overseas?
- How has the Specialist Program facilitated reciprocal relationships and encouraged shared learning and knowledge among Specialists, host country individuals and collaborating institutions?
- How have Specialists continued professional relationships with colleagues or institutions they encountered during their assignment(s)?

How does the Specialist Program impact Specialists' professional knowledge, expertise, and development?

- How has participation in the Specialist Program provided Specialists with opportunities they would not have had otherwise?
- How have Specialists benefited professionally from their participation in the Specialist Program?

² English for Specific Purposes (ESP) refers to teaching a specific genre of English for vocational purposes, such as business English or medical English.

³ For the purposes of this report, the word "instructors" is used to refer to instructors of English at any level of education, including primary and secondary school teachers, university faculty and teachers of adults.

1.3 Data Collection Strategy

The evaluation used a mixed-method data collection strategy that incorporated both a quantitative online survey and qualitative in-country interviews to evaluate the Specialist Program.

Online Survey

An online survey was administered to English Language Specialists in the fall of 2012 to collect quantitative and some qualitative information on their experiences. The survey sample was identified through the use of participant lists provided by ECA's Office of English Language Programs. Participant contact information was updated as necessary through telephone and online outreach to Specialists. The final sample of Specialists invited to take the survey consisted of 231 participants who participated in the program between 2004 and 2009.⁴ A total of 163 respondents took the survey, representing a response rate of 71 percent.

Qualitative Fieldwork

The evaluation team conducted fieldwork in four countries in 2011 and 2012: Chile, Russia, Thailand, and Turkey. The team conducted interviews with professors and administrators at universities and other institutions visited by Specialists, as well as Ministry of Education officials, Regional English Language Officers (RELOs), English Language Officers and other Post/Embassy English language programming staff.

1.4 Respondent Profile

Online Survey Respondents: English Language Specialists

As a group, English Language Specialists represent a highly qualified and experienced cadre of experts in the field of TESOL/TEFL. The surveyed population was largely homogeneous in terms of their professional and educational backgrounds. Most survey respondents reported that they held an advanced degree (98 percent), had more than 15 years of professional experience (86percent), and worked in a U.S. university setting (62 percent). Those who were not affiliated with a university most commonly were self-employed (15 percent) or retired/not currently working (10 percent); some of these respondents indicated that they had formerly worked at a university.

Within the broader field of TESOL/TEFL, the majority of respondents (58 percent) specialize primarily in teacher training. Smaller numbers (10 percent or less) indicated that their primary specialization was ESP, materials/textbook development, assessment, curriculum design or instructional technology.

Most (80 percent) of the surveyed Specialists completed between one and five assignments during the evaluation period; more than a third (39 percent) of them had only one assignment. The remaining 20 percent of respondents completed more than 5 assignments, mostly in the range of 6 to 10, although a few had done even more. Furthermore, some Specialists indicated

⁴ The evaluation team was not able to locate contact information for some participants, and did not survey others who currently work for ECA or the Department of State.

that they had completed various assignments prior to and/or after the evaluation period. For example, one respondent wrote, “I’ve had about 38 Specialist grants since 1980.”⁵

The surveyed Specialists reported having been placed in 105 countries, representing a cross-section of all major geographical regions. Specifically, two-thirds (67 percent) of the assignments completed by survey respondents were in the Western Hemisphere (24 percent), Europe/Eurasia (22 percent) or the Middle East/North Africa (21 percent); the remaining third were distributed among South/Central Asia (13 percent), East Asia/Pacific (11 percent) and Sub-Saharan Africa (8 percent).

In-Country Interviewees

The in-country interviews were conducted with individuals who were knowledgeable about Specialist visits that had been held in their country; often these individuals had a role in coordinating the Specialist activities and/or were supervisors of English instructors who participated in Specialist trainings. Thus, the interviewees themselves were not necessarily participants in a Specialist program, but were interviewed based on their knowledge of how these programs impacted their colleagues, students and/or other English language professionals.

Most of the interviewees were TEFL specialists themselves—typically program administrators, department chairs or professors at universities or other educational institutions, such as English language institutes or teacher training institutes. In fact, some of them had founded the program or institution that they direct. Furthermore, many interviewees are known as national TEFL experts beyond their own institutions. For example, several of them were officers of their national TESOL association⁶ or other professional association and/or had worked on national-level English curriculum or assessment initiatives.

Whereas the interviewees themselves were nearly all high-level TEFL experts, the individuals who participated in Specialist trainings and activities represented a much broader spectrum of English language professionals, including primary/secondary school teachers and pre-service teachers, as well as university instructors and other leading national TEFL experts. (See sec. 2.3 for details.)

As such, throughout this report, it should be understood that the comments from in-country interviewees sometimes refer to their own experiences with Specialists and sometimes to the experiences of teachers and others who participated in Specialist trainings.

⁵ Specialist, teacher training specialist.

⁶ The TESOL International Association is a U.S.-based association for TESOL/TEFL professionals worldwide. Many countries have affiliate chapters.

1.5 Limitations of the Evaluation

Any study that attempts to capture the impacts and outcomes of a program with a diversity of settings and roles is subject to limitations. In assessing the results of this evaluation effort, the following limitations should be kept in mind.

- As in all studies that seek to obtain individual-level assessments of programmatic outcomes, the information provided by Specialists, as well as in-country interviewees, is perceptual and may contain respondent-level biases.
- The evaluation team collected data retrospectively, asking respondents to recall events and activities that may have taken place up to 8 years prior.
- In-country fieldwork took place in 4 of the 110 countries worldwide where Specialists completed assignments during the evaluation period. As a result, qualitative data is less robust for countries that were not visited by the evaluation team.
- The results presented in this report reflect the experiences and opinions of the evaluation participants (survey respondents and interviewees) only and cannot be generalized to all Specialists and program participants.

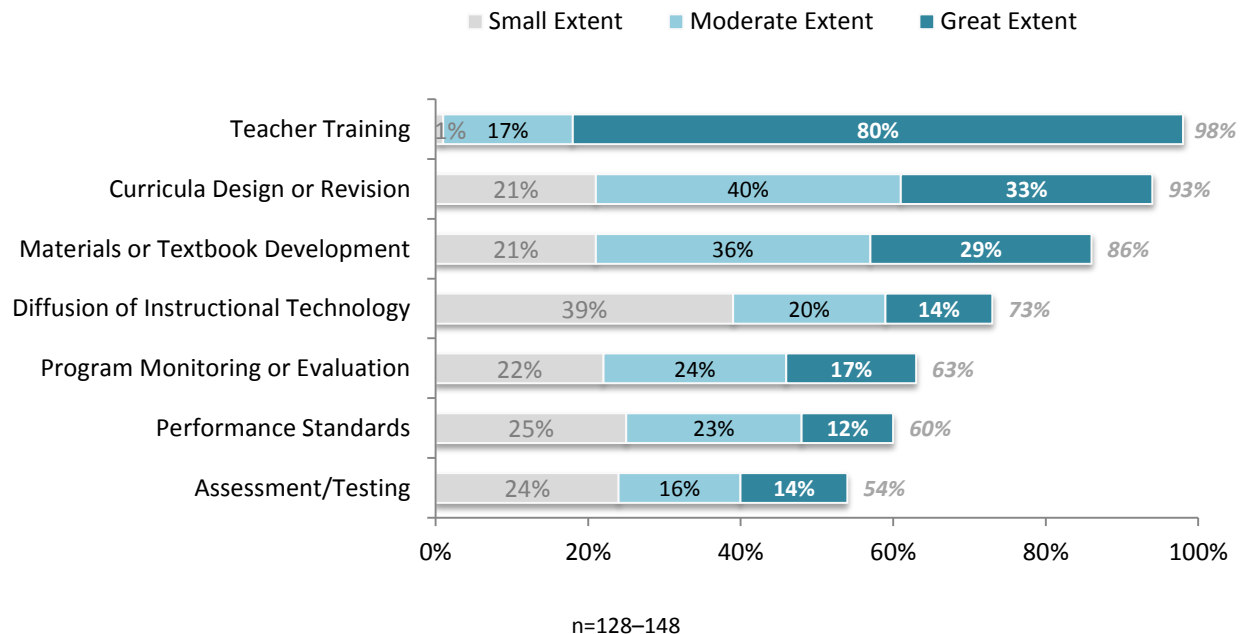
2.0 English Language Specialist Activities

Given that Specialist assignments typically are designed to meet a specific need of host country English language instructors and/or other professionals, the focus of assignments varies widely, from serving as a keynote speaker at a national TESOL/TEFL conference to serving as a consultant on a specific project. In many cases, once a Specialist arrives in the country, she is called on to perform additional tasks, such as visiting schools or giving public lectures. As such, one Specialist assignment often involves multiple activities, but usually involves some type of training. Similarly, depending on the purpose of an assignment, the audiences that Specialists address or work with range from English teachers (primary and secondary) and TEFL faculty to government officials, students, business professionals and the general public. This section provides an overview of what Specialists do, with whom they work and the topics or skills they address.

2.1 Areas of Professional Development

Nearly all (98 percent) of surveyed Specialists reported having performed teacher training to some extent during their assignments, 80 percent to a “great extent.” In addition, the majority of survey respondents provided some level of professional development in the other areas listed in Figure 2. In particular, most respondents assisted with curriculum design (73 percent) and/or materials development (65 percent) to a “great” or “moderate” extent.

Figure 2. Areas of Professional Development Provided by Specialists



However, it should be noted that in many cases, support in these areas was provided in the form of teacher training. Thus, there is substantial overlap between “teacher training” and all the other categories. A university professor in Russia explained, “It’s all teacher training. Information

Technology, that's teacher training. Assessments, that's teacher training. ..."¹ In other cases, Specialists were brought in as consultants to help with one of these aspects at an institutional or national level; in such instances, they typically worked with higher-level English language professionals, such as ministry of education officials, university faculty, program administrators, or national curriculum or exam writers.

2.2 Activities

As noted earlier, one Specialist assignment often involves multiple activities, though in most cases, each visit is centered around one primary activity—such as presenting at a TESOL/TEFL conference, providing intensive training seminars or consulting on a specific project. Nonetheless, some assignments did not have a central activity, but rather involved a series of different talks or workshops for a variety of audiences—sometimes as many as 10 or 20. The following comments provide a glimpse into the range of activities conducted during assignments:

[I gave] talks, workshops and [had] several small meetings with university or teacher training school faculty, MOE[Ministry of Education] officials and others engaged in teaching English or training English teachers. ...
—Specialist, teacher training

I gave six lectures (including the keynote address) at six different universities and institutes, on such diverse topics as language acquisition, American history, politics, literature, mass culture.
—Specialist, ESP

I gave 13 workshops over a time period of 2 weeks at a wide variety of institutions ranging from secondary to college/university to a small community in the hills of the Galilee to a pedagogical center in East Jerusalem to an American Language Center.
—Specialist, materials/textbook development

This section provides a breakdown of the most common activities undertaken by Specialists during their assignments, accompanied by illustrative examples.

Conferences

The majority of survey respondents participated in at least one host country professional conference between 2004 and 2009, most commonly the national TESOL conference² or its equivalent, though occasionally other types of conferences. As a university administrator in Turkey explained, when a Specialist is invited to a host country to participate in such a conference, often this involves multiple presentations:

ELT [English language teaching] conferences in the country are generally 2- or 3-day conferences ...[The Specialists] generally, of course, are invited as plenary speakers. They also do some panels and also other workshops. It depends on the organization, and it depends on the schedules.
—University administrator, Turkey

Indeed, 61 percent of Specialists surveyed had given a plenary or keynote speech, and nearly three-quarters (72 percent) had presented at least one workshop or training at a conference. In

¹ University professor, Russia.

² National TESOL associations typically hold an annual conference for English language professionals from across the country.

addition, more than a third (38 percent) of respondents had consulted with organizers on some aspect of the conference.

Training Seminars and Workshops

A good deal of Specialist training occurred outside of the conference setting, primarily at seminars and workshops held at universities. A common format for such training is an intensive week-long (or sometimes 2- to 3-week) seminar with a specific focus. For example, several interviewees in Russia referred to a series of week-long seminars conducted by Specialists for the writers of the first Unified State Exam in the English language, while in Turkey several interviewees spoke highly of a program called the Columbia University Summer Institute, at which Specialists provided training for university and secondary school instructors. (The impacts of such programs will be discussed in chs. 3 and 4.)

Another model for training host country English language professionals involved providing numerous short workshops (1–2 days) at multiple venues for different audiences. For example, one Specialist explained that her “main assignment was to give teachers, Ministry of Education people, principals, administrators, etc., workshops on assessment. This happened in many venues.”³ Along the same lines, another Specialist wrote, “[I] delivered 1.5-day training workshops for six different audiences of educators.”⁴

Consulting on Specific Projects

As noted earlier, in some cases Specialists are brought in to a host country to provide expert consultation on a specific project, rather than to provide teacher training. Such consultations may take place at an institutional, regional, or national level. Many such projects correspond to the categories listed in Figure 2 above, such as curriculum design, materials development, or advising on assessment. Following are a few illustrative examples:

- **Curriculum.** “[My assignment involved] consulting and advising on [the curriculum of] South Africa’s only university-level bilingual program in English and an African language.”⁵
- **Materials or Textbook Development.** “[I] developed and edited a series of ESP texts.”⁶
- **Program Monitoring or Evaluation.** “[I conducted a] bilingual program evaluation for Birzeit University [in the West Bank].”⁷
- **Assessment/Testing.** “[I conducted a] review of classroom tests (diagnostic and achievement) developed by the institution.”⁸

In addition, a few Specialists worked on special projects, such as designing intensive English camps or helping to develop a literacy program in refugee camps.

³ Specialist, assessment/testing.

⁴ Specialist, materials/textbook development.

⁵ Specialist, bilingual education.

⁶ Specialist, ESP.

⁷ Specialist, teacher training.

⁸ Specialist, teacher training.

Whereas Specialist assignments typically include one short-term visit to the host country, several Specialists and host country interviewees referred to assignments that involved long-term consulting projects lasting as long as 1 or 2 years. For example, one Specialist worked on the “redesign of a 4-year curriculum at a teacher training institute” in Uzbekistan,⁹ which involved six in-country visits and an intensive summer seminar in the United States for the Uzbek participants, while another Specialist collaborated with Russian teachers and students over the course of 2 years to produce a book.¹⁰

Furthermore, several Specialists reported that they had consulted with or provided advice to English instructors’ professional associations. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, developing and strengthening such associations was one of the broader impacts of Specialist visits.

Additional Activities

In addition to their primary training or consulting assignments, Specialists reported doing a variety of other activities while in host countries, including classroom visits, public lectures and media interviews.

Classroom visits. Many Specialists mentioned that they had visited classrooms during their assignments, and this was corroborated by host country colleagues. In some cases, observing teachers in the classroom or teaching “model” classes was part of a Specialist’s primary duties; in other cases, Specialists made such visits during their free time at the request of individual teachers or as follow-up to training sessions. In some cases, these visits allowed Specialists to coach local teachers one-on-one in pedagogical techniques.

[I] coached teachers during their lessons. –Specialist, teacher training

[I conducted] observations of teaching practice as follow-up to workshops—visiting some teachers and dialoguing online with others. –Specialist, teacher training

I conducted classes [with children], with teachers observing and participating. –Specialist, teacher training

[The Specialist and I] went to [visit the classes of] two teachers who invited us desperately. ... [The seminar participants] went to school half the day, and the rest of the day was at the university. So two of those mornings [the Specialist] spent making those visits to the schools. –Retired university professor, Turkey

Public lectures and discussions. Three-quarters (74 percent) of survey respondents reported having interacted with the general public during their assignments. Several Specialists explained that they had given public lectures or led discussions on either the English language or a wide variety of other topics, such as U.S. culture or politics. These talks were sometimes hosted by the U.S. Embassy.

At the U.S. Embassy's weekly Chai Chat [in Uzbekistan], I presented “How Can I Improve My Pronunciation?” to a wildly enthusiastic standing-room audience of approximately 150 people.

⁹ Specialist, curriculum design.

¹⁰ As reported by two interviewees in Russia (a university professor/representative of professional association and a university administrator).

They were singing, jumping up and down with stressed syllables, and practicing with their neighbors.
–Specialist, teacher training

The DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] had organized a talk for me with the general public ... about race relations in the US ahead of Obama's first candidacy. It was attended by approximately 120 Congolese who were enthusiastic to listen and contribute with many questions. The discussion was guided by a Newsweek article distributed earlier by the DCM.
–Specialist, teacher training

Also, in at least one case, a Specialist interacted with the public during a teacher training session: “In Mary, Turkmenistan, members of the public came to see my content-based lesson plan,¹¹ applying English to descriptions of their region.”¹²

Media interviews. The majority (56 percent) of respondents reported having “interacted” with the media at least occasionally during their assignments. While a couple of Specialists worked with media professionals in a training capacity, nearly a third (31 percent) of survey respondents specified that they had given interviews to the media, and such interviews were mentioned frequently in Post/Embassy reports of Specialist visits. A few Specialists elaborated on the nature of these interactions or interviews:

I was invited to give an evening seminar hosted by the Bahrain Banking Institute and sponsored by the Bahrain Society for Training and Development. ... This was followed by a ... reception, during which time I was also interviewed by the media, with an article appearing in the leading English language paper the next day.
–Specialist, ESP

I wasn't interviewed, but my class was filmed for a TV program in Benghazi.
–Specialist, teacher training

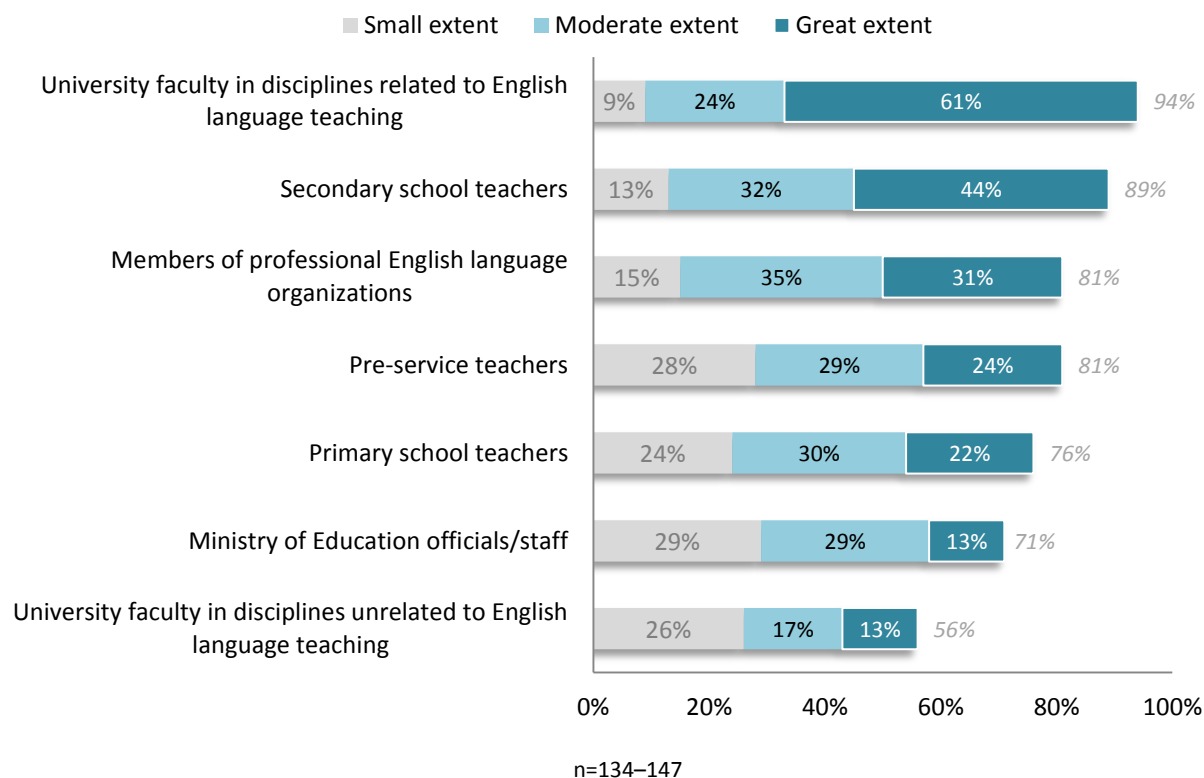
¹¹ Content-based instruction is “an approach to language teaching that focuses not on the language itself, but rather on what is being taught through the language; that is, the language becomes the medium through which something new is learned.” (Olenka Bilash, “Content Based Instruction,” *Best of Bilash: Improving Second Language Education*, University of Alberta, <http://www.educ.ualberta.ca/staff/olenka.Bilash/best%20of%20bilash/content.html>)

¹² Specialist, teacher training.

2.3 Groups Worked With

As illustrated in Figure 3, the majority of Specialists surveyed have provided training for host country English language professionals at all levels, from primary school teachers to university faculty and ministry of education officials. In particular, 61 percent of survey respondents trained university-level TEFL faculty to a “great extent,” and 44 percent trained secondary school teachers to a great extent.

Figure 3. Groups Trained by English Language Specialists



In many cases, participants in a given training represented a mixture of these groups. For example, one Specialist provided a 2-week training program in business communication for both faculty and undergraduates at a university in China,¹³ and another provided training in computer-assisted language learning (CALL)¹⁴ for both pre-service and in-service teachers in Turkey.¹⁵

English Instructors with Limited Access to Professional Training

Specialists also reported working frequently (“often” or “very often”) with English language professionals who have a particularly strong need for professional training, namely:

¹³ Specialist, ESP.

¹⁴ CALL refers to “applications of the computer in language teaching and learning,” including interactive self-study computer programs available on CD-ROM and DVD, as well as Web-based learning resources. (Graham Davies, “CALL (computer assisted language learning),” LLAS Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, University of Southampton, <https://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/61>.)

¹⁵ Specialist, instructional technology.

- Those who live in remote areas with little access to professional development opportunities (64 percent) and/or
- Those who have low levels of English language proficiency (44 percent).

In addition, 8 in 10 Specialists (79 percent) reported interacting frequently with professionals who had little prior direct contact with a U.S. expert in TESOL/TEFL.

For example, one Specialist reported having provided training to “a small group of elementary/secondary school teachers [in Japan] with limited to moderate English language proficiency,”¹⁶ while another gave workshops in “remote areas” of Lebanon and the Philippines.¹⁷ Indeed, a university administrator in Russia said that sending Specialists outside of major cities is “one of the best ways ... of using your experts.”¹⁸ As will be discussed in Chapter 3, both survey respondents and host country interviewees indicated that interaction with Specialists often makes the most impact on these groups.

Other Professional Groups

Various Specialists also reported having trained other groups of professionals, aside from those included in Figure 3:

- ***Instructors at English language schools or institutes.*** Several respondents reported having trained instructors who work for U.S.-affiliated language centers, and others worked with instructors at private or “community-run” English language education centers.
- ***School or program administrators.*** In some cases, especially when brought in to provide assistance with institutional-level change, such as revising curriculum or assessment procedures, Specialists worked directly with administrators, often alongside faculty. For example, one Specialist reported training school administrators in “teaching tolerance through English,”¹⁹ and another worked with university faculty and administrators to develop new foreign language teaching standards.²⁰
- ***National English language experts.*** A few Specialists mentioned assignments in which they had advised a group of the host country’s leading English language experts. For example, one survey respondent described the program participants as “national educational leaders,”²¹ and another referred to having taught a multi-day assessment seminar to “key people responsible for, and having experience with, assessment.”²² Likewise, in Russia, several in-country colleagues referred to a series of Specialist trainings that were provided specifically for writers of the Unified State Exam for the English language. (See sec. 4.3 for details.)

¹⁶ Specialist, Teaching English to Young Learners. (Teaching English to Young Learners refers to methods of teaching the language to children aged 4 to 12.)

¹⁷ Specialist, teacher training.

¹⁸ University administrator/English teachers association officer, Russia.

¹⁹ Specialist, teacher training.

²⁰ Specialist, instructional technology.

²¹ Specialist, writing.

²² Specialist, assessment/testing.

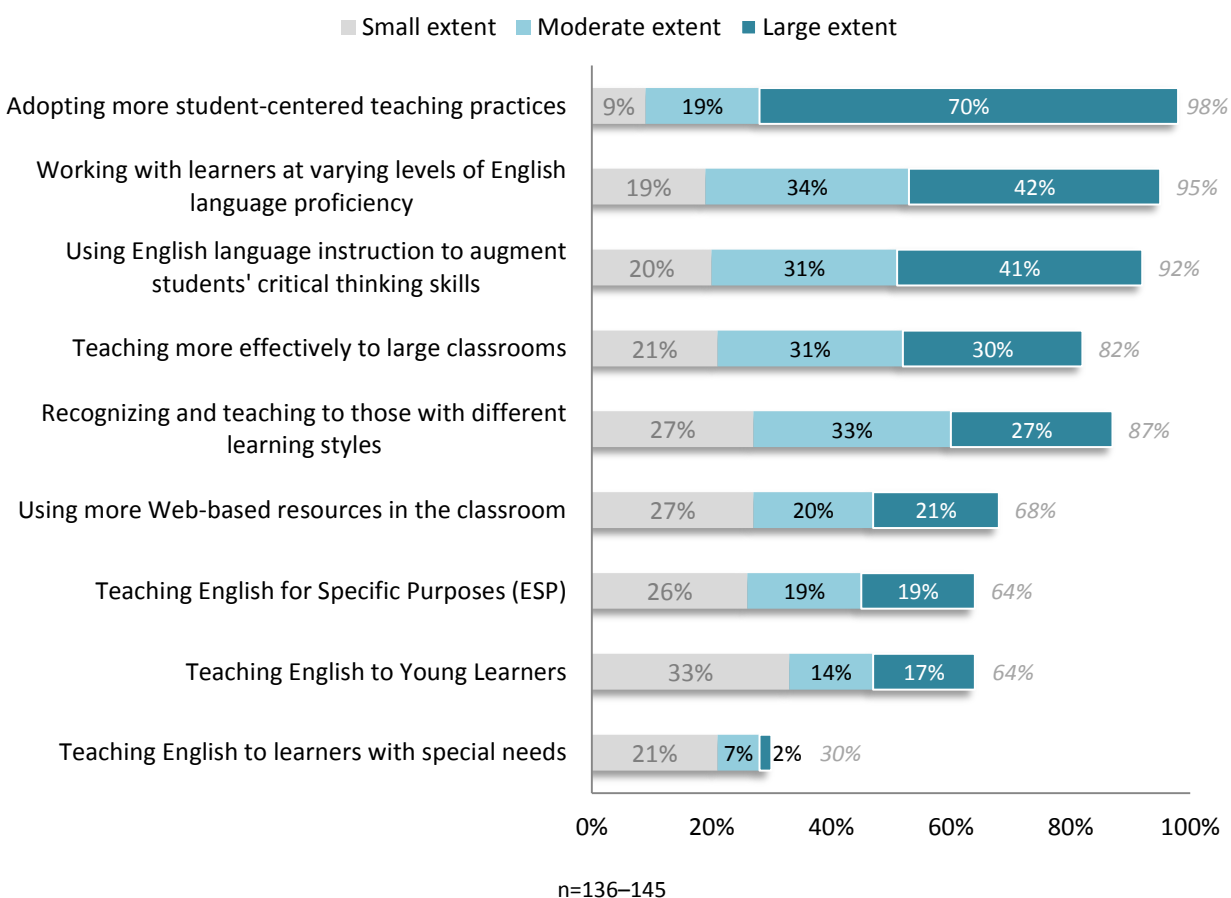
- **Professionals from the private and public sectors.** One of the areas in which Specialists provide training is ESP. In some cases, Specialists worked directly with government officials, NGOs, businessmen, journalists, or law enforcement professionals.

Lastly, most Specialists also trained university students. Most commonly, as indicated in Figure 3, more than three-quarters (81 percent) of respondents provided some training to pre-service teachers. In addition, several survey respondents and host country colleagues mentioned that Specialists had provided training for other university students of English (those not pursuing teaching careers). For instance, one Specialist reported “visiting various local universities and speaking with students who were studying English,”²³ and another “provided motivational workshops for English language students at two universities and a local language institute.”²⁴

2.4 What They Taught

The most significant focus of Specialist training activities during the evaluation period was showing teachers how to create a more student-centered learning environment—as shown in Figure 4, more than two-thirds (70 percent) of Specialists reported focusing on this to a “large extent” during their assignments.

Figure 4. Pedagogical Skills/Methods Addressed in Teacher Training



²³ Specialist, teacher training.

²⁴ Specialist, ESP.

Specialists described presenting a wide array of methods that support a more student-centered, interactive classroom, ranging from task-based learning²⁵ to games to speaking and listening exercises. Furthermore, many of the specific skills and methods that the majority of Specialists reported focusing on (in fig. 4) are elements that help teachers adopt a more student-centered approach, such as working with learners at varying levels of proficiency (76 percent focused on this to a “large” or “moderate” extent) or with different learning styles (60 percent), and incorporating critical thinking skills into language instruction (72 percent). Along the same lines, 61 percent of survey respondents focused on teaching more effectively to large classrooms, which often involved demonstrating how to apply the student-centered approach in such settings: “[I mainly focused on] how to teach in a student-centered, content-based and interactive way in very large classes. ...”²⁶ Typically, Specialists addressed multiple techniques in each workshop.

[I gave workshops] in which teachers experienced learner-centered communicative language instruction²⁷ that appealed to learners’ multiple intelligences.

–Specialist, teacher training

[I addressed the need to] help teachers and teacher educators to implement techniques for increasing motivation and learner interaction in the classroom, with consideration of multiple learning styles and intercultural communication. ...

–Specialist, teacher training

Although only 41 percent of survey respondents reported focusing on the use of Web-based resources in the classroom to a “large” (21 percent) or “moderate” extent (20 percent), both Specialists and host country colleagues referred to this frequently in their comments. In fact, in several cases, CALL or some other type of technology training was the main focus of Specialist assignments, as illustrated by the following comments:

[The main need I addressed was] appropriate use of technology in language teaching.

–Specialist, instructional technology

[The main focus of my assignment was to] train teachers and teacher trainers in best practices using emerging technologies in promoting ELT.

–Specialist, instructional technology

The focus of technology training ranged widely, from integrating online teaching platforms into language classes, to the use of computer programs/Internet for students to practice a language independently, to simply showing instructors how to find resources online. Some Specialists emphasized that the extent of technology they were able to teach depended greatly on the available resources in the host country.

In addition to the skills and methods included in Figure 4, Specialists described numerous other areas in which they trained host country English language professionals, most frequently communicative language teaching, content-based instruction and assessment techniques. The following comments provide just a few examples of the ways in which Specialists taught these techniques.

²⁵ In task-based learning, “[t]he primary focus of classroom activity is the task, and language is the instrument which the students use to complete it. The task is an activity in which students use language to achieve a specific outcome.” (Tim Bowen, “Teaching approaches: task-based learning,” *One Stop English*, <http://www.onestopenglish.com/support/methodology/teaching-approaches/teaching-approaches-task-based-learning/146502.article>.)

²⁶ Specialist, teacher training.

²⁷ Communicative language teaching is a method that focuses on enabling students to use the language to communicate in real-life contexts, rather than just learning grammatical structures or memorizing vocabulary.

[I] used business cases as a basis for [teaching] communicative techniques.

–Specialist, ESP

[I taught] in-service teachers methods of content-based instruction in conjunction with a new American Studies textbook. ...

–Specialist, sociolinguistics

I was working with teachers on performance-based assessments.²⁸ I ... trained them in standards, backward curricular design, proficiency levels/guidelines, as well as in designing performance assessment tasks and creating rubrics.

–Specialist, teacher training

Furthermore, each of the following training areas was mentioned by at least a few evaluation respondents:

- **Reflective teaching/action research.**²⁹ “The [Specialist] program had some research perspective, manipulating things in your own classroom to see if you can do things differently, small-sized research.”³⁰
- **Academic writing.** “[I provided] assistance to professors wanting to publish their research in English-medium journals.”³¹
- **Integrating U.S. culture into English language instruction.** “[My main focus was] establishing cultural context for language through access to authentic voices coming from American culture.”³²
- **Developing teaching materials or lesson plans.** “[I] modeled materials I had brought with me ... then encouraged and assisted my workshop teachers in preparing their own.”³³
- **Classroom activities for instructors/schools with limited resources.** “I brought dozens of activities that require no technology (or even electricity), but which can be used to develop multiple skills in a classroom crowded with many students using only paper and pencils.”³⁴
- **Using English language instruction as a vehicle for peace-building or cross-cultural understanding.** “[I focused on] integration of English instruction with issues related to peace-building in the society, especially healing from the wounds of war.”³⁵
- **Teaching grammar.** “I showed interactive, communicative ways of giving students practice with grammar structures.”³⁶

²⁸ In performance-based assessment, instructors assess students’ ability to apply knowledge by performing tasks, rather than by testing their theoretical knowledge.

²⁹ Reflective teaching, in the EFL context, has been defined as a process by which instructors “react, examine and evaluate their teaching to make decisions or necessary changes to improve attitudes, beliefs and teaching practices.” Action research is one method of reflective teaching, in which instructors observe, record and analyze students’ reactions to different “actions” (teaching strategies) or situations in the classroom. (Allen Quesada Pacheco, “Reflective Teaching and Its Impact on Foreign Language Teaching,” *Revista Electrónica “Actualidades Investigativas en Educación,”* 5 (2005): 2, 12–13, <http://www.redalyc.org/pdf/447/44720504006.pdf>.)

³⁰ University professor, Turkey.

³¹ Specialist, teacher training

³² Specialist, U.S. culture

³³ Specialist, teacher training

³⁴ Specialist, teacher training

³⁵ Specialist, teacher training

³⁶ Specialist, teacher training

- ***How to make learning enjoyable for students.*** “[I] modeled sample techniques for making language learning fun. ...”³⁷

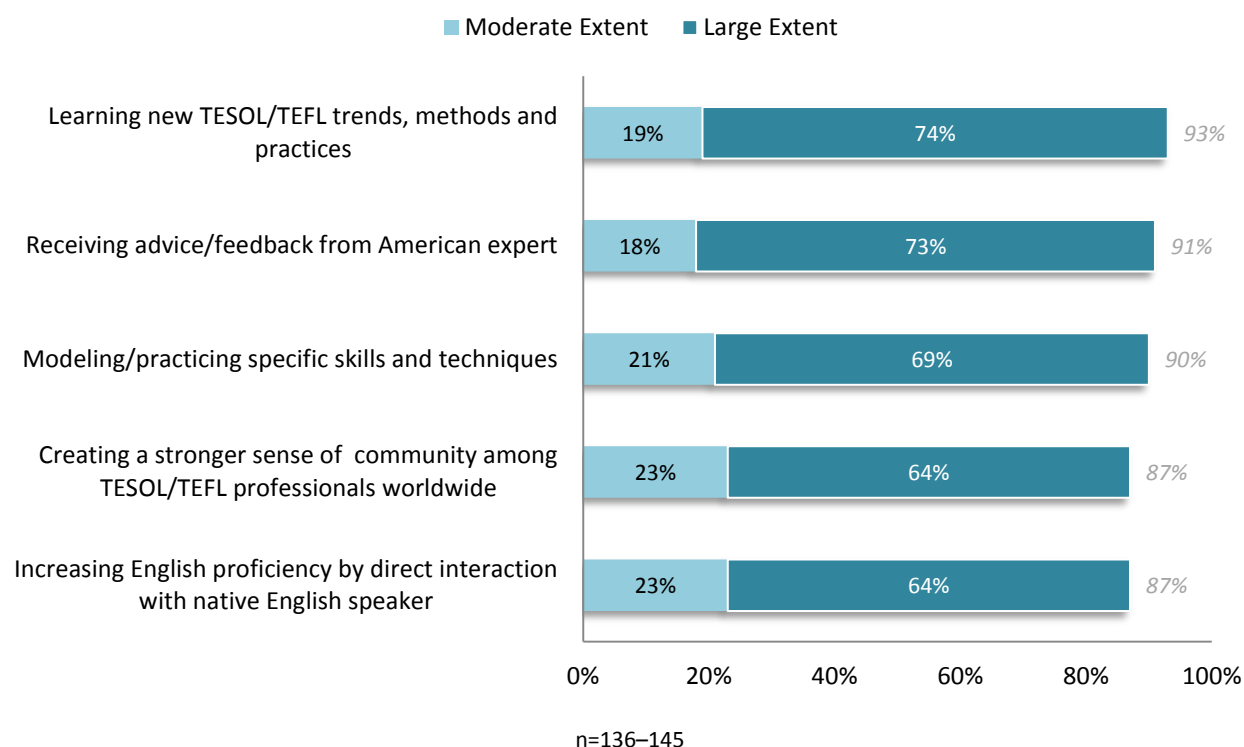
In summary, Specialists have assisted host country professionals with every aspect involved in English language instruction, from the planning stage of curriculum and program design, to teaching techniques that can be used in the classroom, to the assessment stage. Furthermore, they have reached a broad range of audiences within the countries they visited. Thus, the program itself creates a framework in which Specialists have the capacity to make a broad impact. These impacts will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

³⁷ Specialist, ESP.

3.0 Specialists' Impact on English Instructors and Classrooms

English Language Specialists often make a lasting impact on the English instructors they work with, in terms of both their classroom practices and their overall professional development. Some of the most significant benefits of Specialist visits for host country professionals are listed in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Benefits of Specialist Visits for Host Country TEFL Professionals: Specialist Perceptions



*Figures for a “small extent” are not included here. If they were included, the total for each category would be 100 percent.

3.1 English Instructors Learn and Apply New Teaching Methods

As detailed in Chapter 2, Specialists taught a wide variety of teaching methods, many of which host country English instructors found useful and applicable for their classrooms. Indeed, as shown in Figure 5, three-quarters (74 percent) of surveyed Specialists indicated that their introduction of new TEFL methodologies had impacted English language professionals to a “large extent.”

In fact, a few host country interviewees identified the opportunity to get updated on the latest trends in English language teaching—as opposed to learning any specific technique—as possibly the greatest benefit of the Specialist Program, especially for those who already have a high level of TEFL expertise:

We were able to listen to the new trends in English language teaching. I think that is the most important thing with this kind of [program].

—University professor, Thailand

[Specialists] update [host country TEFL experts] if there are new developments in language teaching that here in Turkey we haven't been aware of or we haven't yet noticed.

—University administrator, Turkey

More often, though, host country English instructors who participated in Specialist trainings benefited from learning specific techniques or methodologies that could be implemented in the classroom, such as those listed in Figure 6 below. In some cases, interviewees described these new methods as eye-opening or even life-changing for training participants, especially with regard to shifting from instructor-centered to student-centered teaching, as will be discussed in more detail below.

In 1 hour, she showed that it doesn't matter whether this is a test or exercise or whatever, if you put your personal attitude in it and if you somehow relate to each person—and remember there were 60 people in the audience there—but the impression was that she was addressing absolutely each of them personally. ... Just in an hour she probably changed the lives of at least several teachers.

—University professor, Russia

Furthermore, more than two-thirds (69 percent) of surveyed Specialists believed that providing the opportunity for participants to *practice* the new techniques during workshops helped them to a “large extent.” (See fig. 5.) Indeed, many interviewees emphasized that the practical, hands-on, interactive nature of Specialist workshops—a teaching style unfamiliar in some host countries—is an important aspect of the Specialist Program in that it facilitates participants’ learning and equips them to continue using the techniques after the training is over.

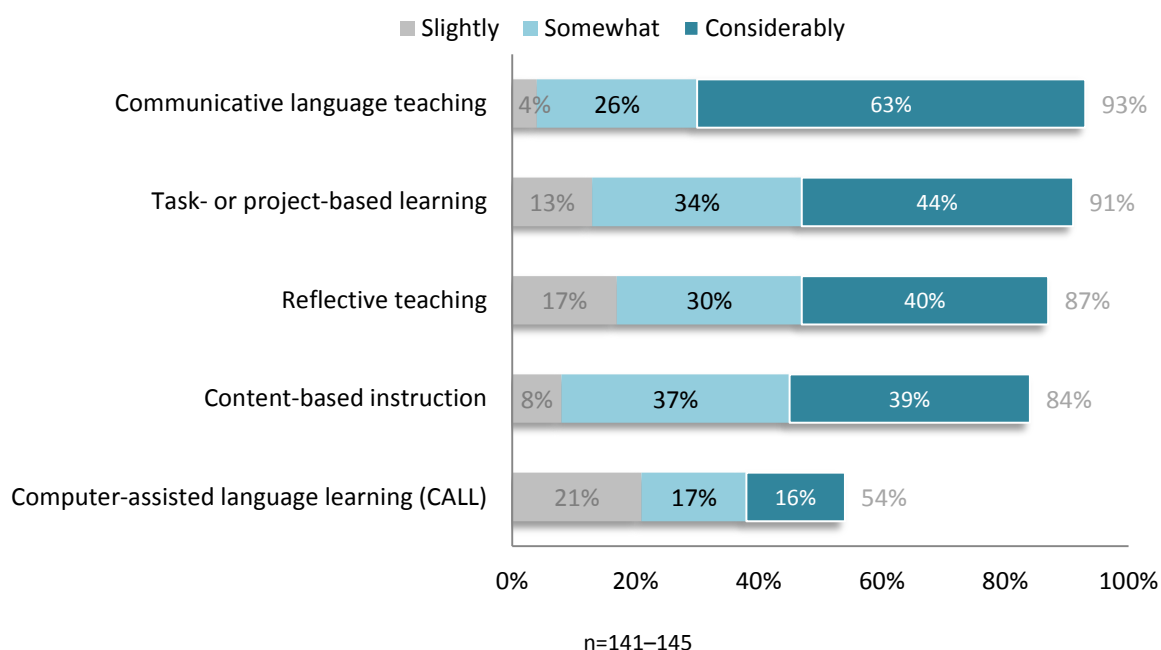
Our teachers, during this workshop, work like students.... So it is a different methodology ... which we don't have here, and it is important for us to not just listen, but [to] act and work with these materials and the assignments.

—University professor/Professional association representative, Russia

[The Specialist] did a lot of hands-on activities during his workshop, and it really—it was something like a course, not like a training program. ... I learned a lot about these techniques.

—Former university professor, Turkey

Figure 6 lists some of the specific pedagogies of which surveyed Specialists believed they had increased host country English instructors’ knowledge.

Figure 6. Host Country Instructors Gain Knowledge of TEFL Pedagogies: Specialist Perceptions

Student-Centered, Interactive Teaching

The most common focus of Specialist visits during the evaluation period was student-centered, interactive teaching. As explained in Chapter 2, many of the specific techniques taught by Specialists contributed to a student-centered learning environment. For example, as shown in Figure 6, most surveyed Specialists believed that they had increased host country English instructors' knowledge of communicative language teaching and task-based/project-based learning¹ either “somewhat” or “considerably” (89 percent and 78 percent, respectively). One university administrator in Thailand explained how a Specialist's conference presentation on task-based learning had influenced teachers in this regard: “[She] gave [secondary teachers] the idea to teach best, instead of lecturing, [to] ask students to do some activity by themselves, learn by doing.”² Other interviewees explained how the interactive teaching approach was applied in host country classrooms:

Now I give my students such opportunity to share their opinions, and not give them my opinion and correct answer. I give them [the] possibility to share their meanings, work in groups, prepare some material for our lessons. So absolutely, I changed [my teaching method], thanks to such workshops.

—University professor/Professional association representative, Russia

To have these people come in and bring the perspective of classroom interaction, how important it is, especially in the places where little English is used. ... Even though [we] have a lot of media, the use and interaction which brings fluency is another story. And [the Specialist] brought that.

—University professor/TESOL officer, Thailand

¹ Project-based learning is similar to task-based learning (see ch. 2, footnote 25), but typically involves a long-term project in collaboration with other students.

² University administrator, Thailand.

Use of Technology for Language Teaching and Learning

Although only a third (33 percent) of surveyed Specialists believed they had increased instructors' knowledge of CALL³ “somewhat” or “considerably”(as shown in fig. 6), the use of technology was one of the impact areas mentioned most frequently by host country interviewees. As discussed in Section 2.4, Specialists provided training in various uses of technology for language instructors, including not only CALL—which generally refers to programs for language learners to study or practice on their own—but also online teaching platforms and the use of Internet resources in the classroom. According to interviewees, host country professionals found all of these aspects of technology very useful.

We've also become more digital from then on, since he's presented us with a lot of the online resources. ... He also provided us with some free software. Some of our teachers began to use that in their classrooms and also to upload that information onto a platform. So we've been able to use platforms more often.
—University administrator, Chile

A few interviewees reported using their increased knowledge of online resources to make their own university classes more communicative and student-centered. For example, a professor in Russia incorporated podcasts as a way to enhance students' listening comprehension, while one in Thailand used new online tools to help students take a more active role in their own learning:

[The Specialist] also told us quite a lot about ... effective approaches to listening comprehension and using podcasts at our classes. ... Now, more and more, audio materials can be found on the Web. ... And, for example, I use a lot of podcasts from The Economist Website with my World Politics students.
—University professor, Russia

[The training] has helped me ... to understand, to look at technology more clearly. Beforehand, I looked at Websites as a place for students to learn language. But after his class, I understand that there are other tools that the students can make use of to produce language. So I moved from language learning to language using more. ... I assigned the students to do self-studying like I did.
—University professor, Thailand

In addition, a university professor in Russia emphasized that Internet training had been particularly useful for teachers from outside of Moscow who participated, many of whom had limited prior experience with computers:

Not all the teachers can use the Internet. ... Fifty kilometers from Moscow, there is no Internet. So they have only books and sometimes in their libraries there are only old textbooks. So still it's not the common case, but still there's some and so they want to be ... familiar, to be in touch with some modern technologies and modern methods. And probably it is important to get it from the horse's mouth. So you can read about that, but ... [the Specialist] is also so bright and so enthusiastic that many people just change their attitude toward all these methods and pedagogy.
—University professor, Russia

Assessment Techniques

Several host country interviewees identified assessment as a significant learning area for English instructors who participated in Specialist programs. In particular, Specialist trainings helped host

³ See ch. 2, footnote 14.

country professionals to expand their range of methods for assessing students' English skills or to simplify the way they assess certain kinds of assignments. For example, individual interviewees mentioned that training participants had learned new methods for assessing oral comprehension and speaking abilities; appropriate assessment methods for young learners; and how to use rubrics for grading written assignments. In addition, a university professor in Russia explained that the introduction of some new testing-related concepts in a Specialist workshop for exam writers had made a substantial impact on participants:

And even in 2 or 3 hours, she explained some difficult issues of assessment. The teachers came out with such great knowledge that they probably wouldn't gain in 3 [to] 5 years. ... She also told us about ... some terms we heard for the first time, like the tests should be "transparent" to be valid ... [and] some other terms which many people just didn't think about at that time. So she introduced the main basic concepts into the minds of teachers. ...

—University professor, Russia

The fact that the Specialists conducted the training in a practical way made it easy for instructors to apply the new techniques into their classrooms immediately: "When I'm teaching college students [e.g., pre-service teachers] right now ... teaching and assessment, I use things that I borrow from [the Specialist's] programs, because they were practical things that you could apply to teaching situations."⁴

Receiving and Using New Materials

Host country interviewees noted that Specialists often provided some form of teaching materials during visits, which were greatly appreciated by English instructors who attended their workshops and presentations. These materials could be hard-copy documents or books, links to online resources, or even games or projects for instructors to use in class with their students. For example, one Specialist "researched and purchased appropriate language teaching materials to take along as gifts for participants and local organizers, [and] created and updated a Website to support the workshops as necessary."⁵ In some cases, Specialists reported having prepared materials specifically to meet the needs of host country English language professionals.

Several interviewees cited the materials provided by Specialists—whether compiled from outside sources or designed/customized for a specific assignment—as the most lasting impact of their visits:

He did make a huge impact. ... And after he left, of course, he left a lot of different articles and stuff that we sort of sent to everybody and [had] them analyzed.

—University professor/TESOL officer, Chile

The materials that were handed out [were the most important thing for participants]. ... It was a package to be handed out with games and stories and writing topics.

—Retired university professor, Turkey

As with assessment techniques, materials made a substantial impact because it was easy for instructors to implement them directly in the classroom:

⁴ Retired university professor, Turkey.

⁵ Specialist, ESP.

The materials were very applied, [easy] to pick up and use in the classroom.

—Retired university administrator, Turkey

They give the teachers material—photocopies and material to use in their classroom. And they love it. They are always looking for material.

—University professor, Chile

In some cases, Specialists not only distributed these materials, but also demonstrated their usefulness and how they could be implemented successfully in instructors' classes. One Specialist explained this approach and its impact:

I created a custom syllabus with readings from American literature with which they were unfamiliar. My co-leader and I showed them how we teach these materials and gave them course development strategies to use themselves. ... I received many emails after both summers from participants telling me that it was very valuable. In fact, I continue to receive emails to this day!

—Specialist, materials/textbook development

Along the same lines, a university professor in Russia explained that training participants are able to use new materials most effectively when the workshops involve such demonstrations:

“Specialists show us how to work with these materials. So it is nice to have materials, but you need to see how to use it and what benefits you will have, and you will use this material differently.”⁶

Furthermore, Specialists often left teachers and/or workshop organizers with copies of their presentations or PowerPoint slides—in other words, a written summary of the concepts they covered in their presentations. Host country interviewees indicated that instructors were more likely to apply the concepts learned if they had a copy of such documents to keep after the Specialist visit was over.

[The Specialist] helped [with] all kind of things. These are always kept in files: his transparencies and some handouts. ... And during my teacher trainer observations, I observed that some teachers were using these activities, methods with these students. So they got it from the workshop, and they applied it to their classrooms.

—University administrator, Turkey

Impact on Students

Although the potential impact of new teaching methods on students is probably the most difficult to measure, a few evaluation respondents did make observations in this regard. In particular, two host country interviewees—one in Chile and one in Russia—reported that the new methods employed by English instructors had increased their students' motivation to learn the language:

The fact that [the Specialist] made us see that you could study real-life English also made our students become more motivated with real-life English. For example, nowadays a lot of our students read the English or the American newspapers for their own interests. ... We have increased their motivation with English as a means of communication, a real-life means of communication. And ... our students are teacher trainees. They are going to become English teachers.

—University administrator, Chile

And then [the teachers] came to their classrooms, and they tried [the student-centered approach], and they were amazed with the results, because they said, “It's just changed our

⁶ University professor/Representative of professional association, Russia.

relationship with students.” And the motivation, first of all, that is probably the highest result which we get, when students’ motivation rises.
—University professor, Russia

In addition, a couple of evaluation respondents reported anecdotal evidence that the application of new methods in host country English classrooms had resulted in better student performance. Specifically, a university counselor in Thailand reported that during visits to the classrooms of secondary school teachers who had participated in Specialist training, he had heard comments from students about the impact of new assessment techniques that their teachers had applied to grading essays: “They were enthusiastic about it, because it became easier or more clear to the students what they were expected to do.”⁷ Along the same lines, one Specialist recounted the following experience in Ukraine: “After piloting the new curriculum (and methodology), they could see a huge improvement in their students’ language abilities. This gave them proof that the methodology and materials worked. ...”⁸

3.2 Professional Development and Opportunities for English Instructors

Participation in a Specialist program resulted in various professional benefits for English instructors beyond the classroom.

Meeting and Receiving Feedback from a U.S. Expert

Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of the surveyed Specialists believed that host country English language professionals had benefited to a “large extent” from the opportunity to receive advice or feedback from a U.S. expert. (See fig. 5.) For example, one Specialist wrote, “My colleagues in Venezuela assured me time and again how much they had gained from my being there. I was able to bring them additional knowledge from across the world.”⁹

Host country interviewees indicated that the main benefit in this respect was the opportunity to hear, meet, or work with a foreign TESOL/TEFL expert—the fact that they were from the United States was less significant.

When a speaker comes from the United States or France or whatever, it’s a big deal. ...They’re making a positive [impact]—just their presence ... a scholar from somewhere else. That is something different, it’s just respectful [admirable]. People appreciated [the Specialist] being there, an experienced scholar teaching with Columbia University.

—University writing center coordinator, Turkey

[Hosting] a visiting scholar is not that frequent in Turkey. Right here the academe are in a closed society, limited, restricted in the Turkish world, so ... even though they are working at well-known universities, ... [they are interested] to have connections with the [outside experts].

—University instructor/PhD student, Turkey

Teachers can meet the renowned speakers that they never [would] have a chance [to otherwise]. ...

—University dean, Thailand

⁷ University counselor, Thailand.

⁸ Specialist, ESP.

⁹ Specialist, teacher training.

Nonetheless, a couple of interviewees mentioned that host country professionals appreciate the opportunity to learn about how language is taught in the United States:

[The Specialist visit] gives us a very good opportunity to know more about how linguistic issues are taught in the States.

—University professor, Russia

When [Specialists] say, “This is what we do on our campus,” teachers perk up. They want to hear. There is an innate curiosity about how things get done in the US.

—University counselor, Thailand

Increasing English Proficiency by Interacting with a Native Speaker

As noted in Chapter 2, many Specialists (44 percent) have trained host country English language professionals with limited proficiency in the language. As such, a Specialist visit presented an important opportunity for these professionals to practice their English with a native speaker. In fact, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of surveyed Specialists believed their visits had benefited local English language professionals by affording them a chance to increase their English proficiency. (See fig. 5.) In this vein, one Specialist identified “interaction with a native English speaker” as one of the main needs addressed during an assignment in Turkey.¹⁰

Indeed, several host country interviewees mentioned the importance of interaction with native speakers for local English teachers:

[Having Specialists come to the Thailand TESOL conference] is a very good chance for us Thai teachers who teach English to meet with English native speakers who are professional teachers.

—University administrator, Thailand

There are many teachers who don’t have many chances to speak the language. And you know, if you don’t speak the language, you’re losing it little by little. And this is what happened to so many teachers in Chile, because they’re working in a school that’s not bilingual. ...

—University professor, Chile

I would say that many teachers [from outside of Moscow] have never seen native speakers. So when [they] come to our seminars, they say, “This is the first time.” It is important in terms of language.

—University professor, Russia

New Professional Opportunities or Recognition

Host country interviewees—primarily in Turkey—also mentioned that participation in a Specialist program sometimes provides instructors with important opportunities for professional recognition, development or advancement. Several interviewees noted that participation in a multi-day Specialist training program often culminated with participants—including university faculty and/or primary/secondary teachers—receiving a certificate of completion, which represented an important feather in their professional caps. For instance, a former university professor in Turkey mentioned that primary teachers participating in a Specialist seminar highly valued the certificates they had received from the Ministry of Education at the close of the program.

¹⁰ Specialist, teacher training.

Host country interviewees provided several other examples of ways in which Specialist program participation had led to new professional opportunities or recognition. Most notably, a university administrator in Turkey mentioned that a university-wide Specialist seminar in academic writing had resulted in both improved quality and a greater quantity of academic publications in English-language journals by faculty who had participated, which they attributed directly to the knowledge they had gained from the Specialist:

Once in a while I receive articles, manuscripts from different scholars in [the] university. And ...I notice something—the way, for example, some ideas [are] being dealt with somewhere, and I turn to the person and say, “Now, wow, this is really great. How come you put it in there?” [And he says,] “I sort of remember [the Specialist] saying, for example, ‘Fill a niche. Try to find a niche.’” ... You could see the impact of her now in the articles and in those manuscripts. ... And they ... openly share it with you ... that it’s the impact of [the Specialist’s] presentation.

—University administrator, Turkey

In addition, a former university professor in Turkey explained that she had gained so much expertise in a Specialist seminar on assessment that when she later studied TEFL in the United States, her professor highly esteemed her knowledge:

So even when I was in Florida, I was taking courses of Teaching English as a Foreign or a Second Language, and my teacher asked me to evaluate her syllabus at the end. She said, “Oh, you have a lot of experience about this, so could you just give me some suggestions about how to work—did it work, or do you know something, or can you suggest something I should add or delete from the program?”

—Former university professor, Turkey

Lastly, a university dean in Thailand mentioned that participation in a Specialist program sometimes motivates host country instructors to pursue further education in their field:

Some participants, they have only a bachelor’s degree, and then after they have attended [a Specialist’s conference presentation], they have got some knowledge here. They want to study more, and that’s the inspiration that [Specialists] do. They want to do some study; they want to do some research.

—University dean, Thailand

In fact, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, in the months and years following a Specialist assignment, many Specialists have assisted host country professionals in pursuing opportunities for further education, especially in the United States.

4.0 National-Level Impacts and Multiplier Effects of Specialist Program

The evaluation demonstrates that Specialist visits often make an impact far beyond the individual English language professionals who participate in their trainings—indeed, the methods they introduce often result in institutional-level changes and in many cases even extend to the national level. In fact, the majority of surveyed Specialists believed that their host country visits had impacted English language teaching at both the institutional level (63 percent) and the national level (53 percent) to a great extent (“mostly” or “entirely”). Furthermore, many host country interviewees and Specialists described multiplier effects of Specialist programs, such as the replication of training for wider audiences.

4.1 Institutional Impacts

As discussed in Chapter 2, in some cases Specialist assignments focus on providing professional assistance—such as curriculum development or revision—to a particular host institution. For example, one Specialist wrote, “My assignment at BRAC University [in Bangladesh] was curriculum development for ways to integrate critical thinking into an educational system that normally emphasizes memorization.”¹ As such, several host country interviewees identified ways that Specialist visits had helped bring about changes to the English language curriculum at their institutions. For example, a university professor in Thailand explained that the visit of an instructional technology Specialist had spurred her institution to incorporate technology across the curriculum:

[The Specialist] mentioned that we are a university of technology. So there should be a strong element of technology in our program. ...So actually, we [now] have a course in technology and language use. ... We try to incorporate the use of technology in every course [in the Applied Linguistics program] as well, for the students to use technology as one of the aids for learning, to be like part of their life. Because now, technology is a big part in our life. We'd like our program to treat technology that way.

—University professor, Thailand

In some cases, institutional changes involved a shift in focus toward more independent learning:

We started changing our curriculum with [a] focus on independent learning.

—University professor, Russia

[One need that the Specialists fulfill at the institution is] critical pedagogy. ...We have to empower [students] as people and as citizens through the use or through the teaching of English. English is actually not a content. English is a vehicle or an excuse, to make people go from Spanish to English, but becoming more critical, more creative, more autonomous, more proactive, and, in essence, more a real citizen empowered with the idea that they have to fight for their rights.

—University professor/TESOL officer, Chile

In other cases, Specialist visits resulted in the development of new programs at host country educational institutions:

[I] led curriculum design workshop sessions, resulting in a degree program proposal.

—Specialist, writing

¹ Specialist, materials/textbook development.

[After the Specialist program, host country professors] felt stronger to [tell] their administrators and say, “No, look, we four, three people got together, and we’re planning to open a writing center.” It gave them the urge to write a proposal for a writing center.

–University writing center coordinator, Turkey

We now have a distance learning program for our potential students. ... [Before the Specialist program on instructional technology,] we used to have it only for Muscovites and for people who could physically come to our evening classes. With this distance program we can offer it nationwide.

–University professor, Russia

There were also instances in which Specialist visits resulted in changes—or sparked ideas for possible changes—to the way universities conducted English language assessments:

[After the assignment] I worked on assessment issues with several Mexican colleagues, which were then presented at MEXTESOL [Mexico chapter of TESOL International] and led to changes at their university.

–Specialist, teacher training

I remember very well that multiple universities were complaining about the tests, different tests prepared by different teachers in the same university, and because of that they couldn’t say something specific on one test. They were like, “Oh, I prepare my own tests,” or “I prepare something like this.” Then I and some other university [faculty] talked about that we had testing units in our university where a couple of people are working on just one single test for everybody, but with the ideas of the teachers and the ideas of [the] material. ... We talked about different tests in different universities for English language teaching.

–Former university professor, Turkey

4.2 Multiplier Effects

One way in which Specialists can have a lasting impact in host countries beyond the short time of their visits is when training participants share what they have learned with other English instructors. In some cases, this is done formally—such as when participants replicate the Specialist workshops for other groups of instructors—and in other cases, instructors share new materials or ideas informally with their colleagues. As noted in Section 3.1, the training materials that Specialists left behind facilitated instructors’ ability to share the content of the workshops they attended.

And the snowball effect—I know that these people, participants, mentioned this program to other colleagues. And they came to me or they called me, and they said, “We missed this. We want to receive the program. Do you have the training package or whatever? Perhaps we could get the text.” ... So these people, participants, they mentioned [it], and they explained how this program contributed to their teaching, I guess.

–University professor, Turkey

In many cases, participants in regional conferences want to replicate my workshops or plenary talks with colleagues at their own institution. So I send them my workshop and lecture notes and PowerPoint presentations. In other words—it’s a direct trickle-down effect!

–Specialist, teacher training

Furthermore, in several countries, Specialist materials have been distributed nationally. In Chile, after each Specialist visit, the national TESOL association makes the training materials available

to English instructors across the country via its Website, along with distributing copies of books authored by Specialists to instructors who did not attend the training:

We have books by [Specialists] who come. And then, a year after ... that specific conference, usually the Ministry gives those books out when we have the diploma courses on methodology. So we use what the experts have said permanently.

—University professor/TESOL officer, Chile

Along the same lines, a Specialist mentioned having produced “discs on best practices in testing” during a visit to Russia, which “were distributed throughout the country.”²

In Thailand, a Ministry of Education official described a Specialist training program that was conducted by videoconference in order to reach the widest possible audience of English instructors around the country. The videoconference participants were supervising teachers who would then train other teachers; in addition, the Ministry had the sessions videotaped and distributed to 100 schools and libraries.³

Another important multiplier effect of Specialist visits is the training of university TEFL faculty; these professors play a critical role in their country’s English language teaching because they train pre-service teachers, who will implement whatever teaching methods they learn in their future primary and secondary classrooms around the country. For example, one professor in Russia explained that she had designed new courses in order to pass on the assessment techniques she had learned in a Specialist program: “We can teach and disseminate this knowledge to some people. [It’s] especially helpful for me because I teach teachers. Now I have special courses where we speak about how to make tasks.”⁴

Additionally, in Chile, two interviewees emphasized that Specialist visits had increased TEFL professors’ awareness of their responsibility for English language education in primary and secondary schools nationwide, which the interviewees felt had not succeeded in teaching students how to communicate in English.⁵ For example, a university professor explained, “So, what has happened is that we have a bigger and bigger group of university teachers discussing these [pedagogical] issues and becoming more aware and feeling that they are accountable for what’s going on in the classrooms in schools.”⁶ Likewise, a university administrator in Chile pointed out that the new and different perspectives on English teaching presented by Specialists had helped to meet his country’s need to determine why children were “not learning English” well in school.⁷

In some cases, a multiplier effect occurred at the institutional level, where a change (such as a new curriculum or assessment method) that was implemented successfully at one university was replicated at others. For example, a TEFL professor in Turkey explained that a new proficiency exam designed with a Specialist at her university had been replicated at other institutions:

² Specialist, assessment/testing.

³ Ministry of Education official, Thailand.

⁴ Professor at teacher training institute, Russia.

⁵ According to interviewees, Chile’s education system provides English language classes for students in grades 5 through 12 (a total of 8 years) in most public and private schools.

⁶ University professor/TESOL officer, Chile.

⁷ University administrator, Chile.

“Whatever we do here ... always serves as the model. [Other universities] think that whatever we do is cutting-edge, up-to-date, etc., and they try to take it as a model.”⁸

Lastly, one Specialist described a different type of multiplier effect: she used the materials she had developed for a Specialist assignment in one country to replicate the training in other countries:

[I] developed and edited a series of ESP texts working with local professionals from various disciplines [in Macedonia]. Using these materials and methods, I also worked with professors in Panama and Kazakhstan who were clamoring for some way to address these needs.

—Specialist, ESP

4.3 National Impacts

As noted earlier, the majority (53 percent) of surveyed Specialists believed that their work had impacted English language teaching in host countries at a national level. For example, one Specialist who had worked with the Ministry of Education to develop a “baseline exam” for all English teachers in the host country wrote, “I feel that I have made a contribution to the teaching of English internationally.”⁹

Strengthening National Teachers’ Associations or Networks

As noted in Section 2.2, some Specialists served as advisors, or even helped to develop, host country English teachers’ associations or other networks. Indeed, the vast majority (88 percent) of survey respondents believed that they had made a difference in “creating a stronger sense of community among TESOL/TEFL professionals worldwide”; nearly two-thirds (64 percent) felt that they had contributed to a “great extent.” (See fig. 5 in ch. 3.) For example, one Specialist noted that she “did what [she] could to build relationships between the U.S. Embassy–sponsored project and the local teacher association and its respected leaders,”¹⁰ while another mentioned having “set up a Web network”¹¹ for English language professionals.

Host country interviewees confirmed that Specialists had helped to strengthen existing associations and to build new ties among local English language professionals.

American Specialists sometimes helped a lot with some administrative and organizational issues for Russian teachers, and especially, for example, the association, when we were starting with that, it was important. [A Specialist] was the godmother of the association, and we got a lot of very practical and useful advice from her [on] how to organize the structure, ... even how to organize making phone calls and email, sending letters, setting dues, making people pay them.

—University professor, Russia

[The Specialist] started the network of grammar teachers. We got together a couple of times, and we’ve been in touch through emails, through constantly saying, “Do this, do that, this is better, this is not so.” Also, we’ve been participating in other kinds of conferences. ... At the TESOL conference, the people who go to my lectures, for example, are exactly the same people

⁸ University professor, Turkey.

⁹ Specialist, teacher training.

¹⁰ Specialist, teacher training.

¹¹ Specialist, materials/textbook development.

who went to the grammar conference, and the lectures I attend are the people that came to the grammar conference.
—University administrator, Chile

[The Thai TESOL network is] getting to be stronger, with the help of the U.S. Government in terms of the Specialist Program.
—University professor/TESOL officer, Thailand

Interviewees indicated that forming and maintaining ties with colleagues across their own country helps English language professionals to continue to improve their teaching methods by having the opportunity to cross-fertilize and to exchange ideas.

Russia: Unified State Exam

In Russia, a number of visits by multiple Specialists made a significant national impact by providing critical training to the team of English language experts tasked with the development of the Unified State Exam in English. According to interviewees, this effort represented the first time that all Russian high school graduates could take a standardized college placement exam for the English language. One professor described a visiting Specialist as “invaluable” during this multi-year process,¹² while another explained that a Specialist had come “just in time.”¹³

Thanks to [her], we managed to create [the Unified State Exam], and ... it's only thanks to her visit. Now we have a national group of item writers officially accepted by the Minister of Education.
—University professor, Russia

I think that we owe our success with the ... assessment series and Unified State Exam ... to the American Specialists and to [the] English Language Office at the Embassy, because they are our immediate colleagues.

—University administrator/English teachers association officer, Russia

Furthermore, a university professor noted that the techniques taught by Specialists for the English exam were later applied in Russia for standardizing assessment of other foreign languages:

We're very proud that we managed to unify our exams in other languages, approaches to specifications, levels, task types and even little things such as what do we test when we test reading in detail, inferencing, understanding [the] main idea. It's been all specified for item writers for all the languages. And that was absolutely new. ... That's like a revelation for people.

—University professor, Russia

Other National Impacts

Some evaluation respondents mentioned other ways in which they believed Specialist visits had made—or could make—an impact on English language teaching at a national level. For example, Specialist visits resulted in the addition of an instructional technology component to the programming of national TEFL conferences in Russia and contributed to changes to national English performance standards in Chile.

In our conferences, our national conferences, we started a special section, “IT Technologies in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning”... and people who were especially involved in IT

¹² University professor, Russia.

¹³ Professor at teacher training institute, Russia.

technologies ... come, they make presentations, they share experiences, they publish their materials, and that's how the experience is disseminated all over Russia.

–University professor, Russia

It took a lot of years and help... [to revise Chile's "progress maps" for English language learning in grades 5–12]. In fact, [a Specialist] was in that, and somebody else who writes standards for the States, who's very famous. ...She came for a conference, and then of course we grabbed her and sat her down for a long conversation on standards and progress maps.

–University professor/TESOL officer, Chile

In addition, both Specialists and host country interviewees noted that Specialist visits inject new ideas and pedagogical skills into the TEFL professional community, which can result in changes over time, especially over the course of multiple visits by various Specialists.

Although the program [that I helped to design in Nepal] still has not been initiated and may never be, it provided an important capacity-building activity for participants, resulting in substantial reorientation for whatever future initiatives these national educational leaders undertake.

–Specialist, writing

I don't think that we can speak of English grammar nowadays without referring to [a particular Specialist] and his publications or his products. The same in the teaching of writing. When, particularly, there are teachers [who] do writing, they work with ... the models that were promoted by these [Specialists]. So we've introduced them [into TEFL curricula at Chilean universities].

–University administrator, Chile

Another way that Specialists have helped to foster long-term impact of their trainings is by staying in touch with and continuing to support host country colleagues after returning to the United States, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

5.0 Sustaining Relationships and Institutional Linkages

In addition to supporting the field of English language teaching around the globe, the Specialist Program aims to foster linkages between U.S. citizens and institutions, and those overseas. Thus, the relationships that Specialists have formed and maintained with colleagues met during their assignments overseas represent an important outcome of the program.

It's a tremendous program ... that contributes to both expanding knowledge of current TEFL trends and also allows the Specialist and participants to develop professional relationships.

–Specialist, teacher training

5.1 Forming and Sustaining Relationships

As shown in Figure 7, nearly all (90 percent) of the surveyed Specialists reported forming new professional relationships with English instructors and others—sometimes students—who had participated in their trainings or attended their presentations during host country visits. In addition, more than three-quarters (77 percent) of Specialists reported forming relationships with fellow TESOL/TEFL experts, typically academics from host country universities who had organized or hosted their visits.

Figure 7. Professional Relationships Formed by Specialists with New Contacts

Specialist developed new professional relationships with...		% of Respondents
Host Country Contacts	English teachers or others who participated in training/workshops/consultations/conferences	90%
	Fellow TESOL/TEFL experts from host country	77%
Other Professional Contacts	RELOs, English Language Fellows or other U.S. Embassy staff	84%
	Other English Language Specialists	56%

n=139–144

In fact, many Specialists reported staying in touch with multiple host country contacts:

I have really done what I consider to be a good effort to maintain contact with individuals in all of the countries to which I have been fortunate enough to be assigned as an English Language Specialist.

–Specialist, ESP

In Turkey, I remain in contact with so many of the people who were involved in what I did there.

–Specialist, teacher training

Specialists reported various ways in which they have sustained contact with host country colleagues and/or students. Not surprisingly, email is the most common means of staying in touch. Numerous Specialists also reported staying in touch with their new contacts online, via social media (such as Facebook) or Skype. In addition, many Specialists and host country interviewees mentioned reuniting with new colleagues face-to-face at the annual convention of

the TESOL International Association,¹ during Specialists' return visits to the host country and/or when host country colleagues visited the United States.

While many Specialists described relationships that were short-term in nature—most commonly consisting of requests for materials or other follow-up consultations—several reported having formed relationships that endured for many years after an assignment. Indeed, a third (33 percent) of the survey respondents who reported maintaining relationships with host country colleagues indicated that some of these were ongoing. Given that the program years covered in this study are 2004 to 2009 and the survey was administered in the fall of 2012, this finding suggests that Specialists and host country colleagues have maintained relationships for at least 3 years. In this regard, one Specialist noted, “After my departure I frequently wrote to participants regarding their teaching and life circumstances. Surprisingly, I have kept in touch with several for a good 4 years afterward.”²

Furthermore, some Specialists and host country interviewees described these new relationships as moving beyond the professional realm into friendships, or at least “social” contact. For example, one Specialist wrote, “I’ve kept up with some of the participants, more on a social than professional level.”³ Another Specialist told of a close friendship he had formed with host country colleagues:

Saudi language teaching colleagues, whom I met on my first visit to [the] Kingdom, have become close friends. I met and entertained them for two evenings when they were in Portland on an International Visitors Program. And I visit with them every time I have returned to work in the Kingdom. My friend in Jeddah will fly to Riyadh just to spend a day and evening with me. Pretty special.

—Specialist, ESP

In addition to forming relationships with host country English language professionals, most surveyed Specialists—as shown in Figure 7—also reported staying in contact with U.S. Embassy staff, RELOs and/or English Language Fellows (84 percent), as well as other English Language Specialists whom they met through the program (56 percent). In some cases, Specialists explained that they rely on the RELO as a contact point for staying in touch with host country professionals, as well as for keeping abreast of TEFL developments in the country.

5.2 Collaboration and Institutional Linkages

Numerous Specialists reported having collaborated in some way with their new host country colleagues, most commonly involving research, joint publications, and/or conference presentations.

In particular, many Specialists have given joint presentations with host country colleagues at the TESOL International Convention, in some cases on multiple occasions. Furthermore, in addition to co-presenting, several Specialists also have assisted host country colleagues with developing proposals and securing funding so that they could attend this important professional conference.

[With host country colleagues, I have done] co-presentations for the past 6 years at TESOL.

—Specialist, teacher training/curriculum

¹ Every year, TESOL International holds an annual convention in a different U.S. city.

² Specialist, teacher training.

³ Specialist, materials/textbook development.

[Another Specialist] and I co-presented at the TESOL International Convention with several women who were part of our training in West Africa.

–Specialist, ESP

I have collaborated with Ukrainian colleagues by helping them with TESOL International Association proposal development and writing. ...

–Specialist, teacher training

I wrote a proposal for a panel at the TESOL International Convention in the US that was accepted and through which two teachers from Tajikistan were able to present at TESOL.

–Specialist, teacher training

[A] colleague from Afghanistan and I had our proposal accepted to TESOL this year. We are currently trying to get him funding and visa help for the trip.

–Specialist, teacher training

Some Specialists have collaborated with their new colleagues on joint publications, including textbooks, journal articles, and book chapters:

After [my] 2004 Specialist visit to Iceland, I collaborated with a colleague to write articles for academic journals and published textbooks for teaching EFL [English as a Foreign Language] Academic Writing—one for the university level and another for the high school level.

–Specialist, teacher training

I have published multiple journal articles/book chapters with host country colleagues.

–Specialist, teacher training

[I am] co-writing a chapter in a book with a colleague from the host country.

–Specialist, assessment/testing

In this vein, a university professor in Chile had the opportunity to collaborate on a textbook with a renowned grammar expert who visited the country on a Specialist assignment. The professor explained that the Specialist approached her after hearing her presentation on grammar at a conference he was attending in Chile. After he returned to the States, the Specialist sent the professor several units from his draft-in-progress of a grammar text, which the professor tested with her students and then sent him the results. This experience made a positive impact on the professor, her students, and her university:

He sent me the units, and we were in touch for a while. And then I sent him all that we did with our students, because he sent me some forms to fill in with all the information he needed. ... I was honored because he wanted to work with me and my students, and he liked what I was doing in grammar, but then I realized it was very important for my students and for the university. ... We also mentioned it in the accreditation process. We've got 5 years of accreditation, so it is there.

–University professor, Chile

Along the same lines, a university professor in Russia explained that relationships between Specialists and host country professionals sometimes evolve into long-term collaborations. As an example, she recounted the experience of a fellow professor who, after participating in a Specialist training program, joined the Specialist's research team for an ongoing international project:

She's still working with [the Specialist] on an international project. And she helps [him] with his research. So it's a two-way road, you know. So they came, and they taught us something. But

some of our Specialists now work with our teachers, and they also contribute to data collection and to some piloting and researching and analytics and so on.

–University professor, Russia

One Specialist collaborated with colleagues in various host countries she had visited on Specialist assignments to develop new online courses for ongoing training of English instructors in another ECA program:

[I] met with English Access Microscholarship Program teachers to discuss their challenges and outline some future initiatives. This resulted in the development ... of new online courses—one for Access teachers called Teaching English to Teens and an online course for Access alumni. These were developed through continued collaborations between myself and Access teachers I met in host countries, as well as the RELOs in those countries.

–Specialist, teacher training

In addition, 20 percent of all surveyed Specialists reported having established “formal collaborations” between their home institution and a host country institution. In this regard, a few Specialists indicated that they had helped to arrange—or intended to arrange in the future—an academic exchange between institutions.

[I have worked with host country colleagues to facilitate] continued exchange of students.

–Specialist, ESP

For 2 years, a professor at Saratov [State University in Russia] and I coordinated projects for classes on Cold War culture. The classes communicated via teleconference.

–Specialist, U.S. culture

I have maintained contact with the program director at Lebanese American University. ... We communicate regularly and have been seeking a way to facilitate an exchange between our respective colleges.

–Specialist, teacher training

Likewise, a Ministry of Education official in Thailand described an ongoing exchange program for Thai teachers at the University of Oregon that developed out of a Specialist’s visit. Although that particular Specialist no longer works for the university, the program resulted in a lasting U.S.–Thai institutional linkage:

After we started with the University of Oregon, we brought a group of Thai teachers over there to visit schools and to attend a 2-day workshop at Oregon that they arranged for us, especially for our group. ... The first time we brought teachers [there], they were our participants from this little conference [with the Specialist], and we have done the series. ... Three series, 3 years. ... So we ended up going to Oregon where we had the collaboration with them, and we still have collaboration with them.

–Ministry of Education official, Thailand

Beyond specific collaborations, a number of Specialists indicated that their ongoing dialogue with host country colleagues regarding topics of shared professional interest have been mutually beneficial.

[I have continued to work with colleagues] mostly at the individual cooperative level—sharing ideas.

–Specialist, teacher training

I ... remain in communication with [TEFL program directors] about new developments either here or in their own countries. ...

–Specialist, teacher training

[We maintain] ongoing email correspondence about topics of mutual interest.

–Specialist, teacher training

In fact, several Specialists identified the opportunity to develop relationships with host country colleagues as one of the greatest benefits of the program for the Specialists themselves. In this vein, one survey respondent wrote, “I believe this program allows professionals to connect and consult. ... I aim to collaborate as a colleague to see what they can learn from me and what I can learn from them.”⁴

5.3 Specialists Provide Continued Support to Host Country Professionals

In addition to collaborations and establishing institutional linkages, most surveyed Specialists continued to provide support to host country English language professionals following their assignments. In the words of a university professor in Chile, “We are in touch ... with a lot of those experts and receive support in many ways.”⁵

Indeed, for the most part, Specialists were happy to provide such support. After completing their assignments, they were eager to see the results of their efforts or, as the case may be, to ensure that the work they started during host country visits would be implemented or would lead to the desired outcomes. Furthermore—especially in cases where Specialists had done only a few assignments, or where they worked in countries that had substantial needs and thus felt that their assistance could really make a difference—they became invested in the future of English language teaching in the country. Thus, often they were quite willing to respond when host country contacts sought out their support, and/or they went out of their way to seek out opportunities to provide support.

I post and distribute my contact information after my assignments and encourage colleagues, teachers, and students to email me if they have questions or need resource information.

–Specialist, teacher training

I look for people from both Argentina and Turkmenistan every year at TESOL ... and would love to continue to support them. I am in regular contact with ... a RELO, who lets me know which people are there from various countries.

–Specialist, teacher training

[I] attempted to follow up with emergency support during MASSIVE flooding at one site [where I had provided training and donated materials during my Specialist assignment], but in the end I was informed that the materials I had identified could not be delivered.

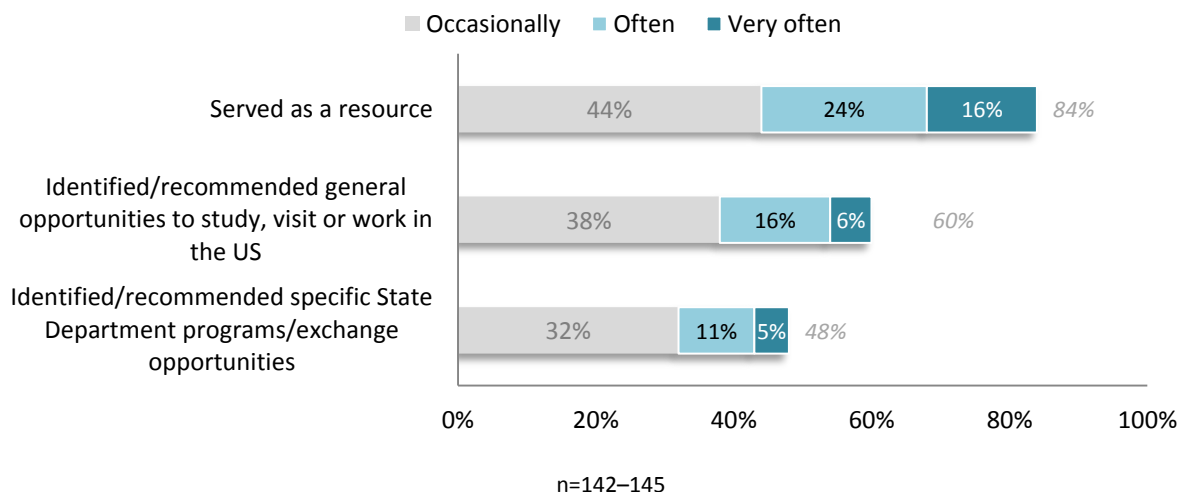
–Specialist, ESP

⁴ Specialist, teacher training.

⁵ University professor/TESOL officer, Chile.

Figure 8 illustrates just a few of the ways in which Specialists have provided support to host country contacts.

Figure 8. Specialist Support for Host Country Nationals Post-Assignment



Serving as a Resource

The great majority (84 percent) of survey respondents reported having “served as a resource” to new colleagues or other “host country nationals,” such as TEFL students. Specialists elaborated on various ways in which they have served as a resource, including sharing materials, offering professional advice and providing continued guidance on activities initiated during their Specialist visits.

Most notably, nearly a third (30 percent) of the survey respondents who had “continued to work with or support host country colleagues” reported having shared teaching materials or resources, typically in response to email requests.

[I have] given colleagues information about resources they can use in their classrooms. ...

—Specialist, teacher training

I have often been approached by former participants for my thoughts on their teaching practices related to CALL, as well as for additional materials that may be useful in their shifting teaching contexts.

—Specialist, instructional technology

Some Specialists have gone above and beyond simply sharing existing materials and resources by creating new resources to serve an ongoing need in the host country. Specifically, a few Specialists created Websites and/or listservs on which they could regularly upload or distribute materials needed by English instructors.

[I] send [a] listserv with activities to teachers. [I] continue to put activities and audios on [my] personal Website for teachers.

—Specialist, classroom management

[I have continued to support host country colleagues by providing] access to materials for English teaching created by me on [the] box.com site.

—Specialist, teacher training

I have recently spent the better part of a month setting up a group list of email addresses for participants that I have trained.... I told them my plan: When I am online reading about TEFL, I often come across an article or an activity that I think would interest them. I have already downloaded some of these. After ... I have a current email list, I will begin to email TEFL articles and activities. ... The Mentor teachers are thrilled to hear that they will continue getting updated resources from me.
–Specialist, teacher training

Another Specialist went so far as to create and to distribute a new textbook, which she supported by offering online discussions for host country students:

Unable to find the kind of materials that teachers told me their students would especially like (a book of stories about American teens), I began a series of interviews with American teens and wrote up these interviews with vocabulary and discussion questions. ... I was able to bring them to the attention of the new PAO [Public Affairs Officer], who had 18 of them made into an e-book that I am told is used with Access students in the country. ...I have been writing weekly to Afghan students who respond. There are over 700 students in Afghanistan who have joined my interview "group" at one point or another, and I have had Skype calls with 2 different classes in computer labs there, 1 class of boys, 1 of girls.
–Specialist, teacher training

Aside from sharing materials, Specialists most commonly have served as resources to host country colleagues by following up on activities started during their Specialist assignment(s), offering general professional advice and responding to other questions related to TEFL.

[During my assignment in Paraguay], I worked with Department of Education people in creating a baseline exam for English teachers nationally, which they followed up on with me for over a year via email.
–Specialist, teacher training

[I] served as a writing center consultant with email collaboration with BRAC University.
–Specialist, materials/textbook development

[I provide] advice to individual teachers who desire to continue their professional education.
–Specialist, teacher training

[I respond] to email questions regarding methodology, recommended materials [and] suggestions for research projects related to ESL⁶/EFL.
–Specialist, teacher training

In one case, following a Specialist visit to Iraq, two Specialists worked together to support local professionals by helping to establish a TESOL chapter in the country.⁷

Another way that Specialists have continued to support their new colleagues' professional development and to keep up with their progress on activities started during in-country assignments is by reviewing drafts of articles, presentations and teaching materials prepared by these colleagues. Some Specialists reported doing so on a regular basis.

I continue to help certain EL [English language] teachers prepare conference presentations and articles for academic journals.
–Specialist, assessment/testing

⁶ ESL: English as a Second Language.

⁷ Specialist, instructional technology.

I often serve as a reviewer of assessments from the participants I have worked with.

–Specialist, assessment/testing

[I have supported host country colleagues by] reading and responding to drafts of articles for publication.

–Specialist, teacher training

Support for Pursuing U.S. Graduate Study or Professional Development Programs

The majority (60 percent) of survey respondents have identified or recommended opportunities for host country English language professionals or TEFL students to study, visit or work in the United States; nearly half (48 percent) of the Specialists also have recommended specific Department of State programs for host country nationals to pursue. (See fig. 8.)

In fact, many Specialists went far beyond simply recommending programs: they supported host country contacts by mentoring them through the application process, providing recommendations and advising them on their theses.

Through email and phone exchanges, I supported the professional development [of a host country professional] and expansion of his credentials through mentoring toward his doctorate degree. ...

–Specialist, classroom communication

I am currently in the process of working with an Egyptian student on her application for a PhD program.

–Specialist, ESP

[My] continued relationship with teachers led to later nominations for [the] E-Teacher [Scholarship Program] and teachers' completion of the course.

–Specialist, teacher training

I have written a letter of recommendation for a participant in Mexico, which helped him get a fellowship.

–Specialist, teacher training

I recommended [one student] for doctoral study at Indiana University Pennsylvania, where she is now designing the research for her PhD. I have advised her on her proposal.

–Specialist, teacher training

[I] helped teachers that I worked with get accepted to [the] MAT [Master of Arts in Teaching] program at my institution.

–Specialist, teacher training

A few host country interviewees corroborated, illustrating what a difference such support can make to someone's career:

For example, when a student reached the end of the program, they had to write their thesis ... and when the issues related to a topic that I know [the Specialist] knows, I give them their email, and they don't know [her, but] she answers right away. This is a good thing. They always keep in touch.

–University professor, Chile

You know what [my former writing center assistant] did with the help of [the Specialist]? She's at Columbia University creative writing program, PhD student. ... They stayed in touch. ... She asked [him] to write her a reference letter.

–Retired university administrator, Turkey

Facilitating Professional Visits to the United States and Abroad

Some Specialists were so impressed with host country colleagues that they arranged for the latter to visit their own universities, usually to teach courses, to conduct research, to participate in a professional exchange or to attend a conference. As with assisting in the pursuit of further education, facilitating such visits not only supports host country colleagues' professional development, but also allows Specialists to continue to solidify and to deepen their relationships with their new contacts.

I also maintained contact for a few years with a professor from the Education Department at LAU [Lebanese American University] and facilitated her assignment as a visiting professor one summer to my own college.

—Specialist, teacher training

The host country colleague came to the US and was hosted at my institution for two visits in connection with a research project he was working on.

—Specialist, teacher training

Two Indonesian teachers came to my previous university for a 4-week exchange program due to my presenting at their university and meeting them in Indonesia.

—Specialist, teacher training

I hosted host country colleagues in my home so they could attend a conference at my university.

—Specialist, materials/textbook development

In one case, a Specialist recommended a host country colleague for an opportunity in a third country:

I recommended a host country colleague from Kuwait ... for inclusion in an ELT proposal I was asked to participate in for a contract in Lebanon. My colleague was accepted into the proposal, but the bidding organization did not win the contract. The connection, however, did provide my Kuwaiti colleague with credibility and introduced her to a wider professional network.

—Specialist, ESP

Conducting Further Training for Host Country Professionals

In several cases, Specialists have returned to a host country to conduct further training for local English language professionals—sometimes for the same group they worked with on their initial Specialist assignment and sometimes for others.

Since completing the assignment, I have had three follow-up visits to Uzbekistan, where I worked with the same group of teachers (among many others).

—Specialist, curriculum design

I have been invited [back] to Iceland on numerous occasions to do presentations for secondary teachers and to lead seminars at the university.

—Specialist, teacher training

I have continued to train teachers in Haiti and to communicate with participants in the program in their professional development.

—Specialist, teacher training

In other cases, Specialists have provided additional training online or virtually:

[I] continue to train teachers via online courses.

—Specialist, instructional technology

[I] continued serving as a workshop facilitator/speaker for their local conferences via Web CT and an online system.
–Specialist, teacher training

[After my Specialist visit to Egypt,] I gave a distance lecture and workshop at the Nile TESOL AUC [American University in Cairo] Skills Conference taking place face-to-face in Cairo ... [in] 2010.
–Specialist, instructional technology

In addition, one Specialist noted that she had continued to support English language professionals in host countries, but did not specify whether this support was conducted virtually or on-site: “[I have] continued [to] work in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar, although most MOE staff and teachers have changed.”⁸

The ongoing relationships and collaborations between U.S.-based Specialists and host country colleagues have helped to continue the cross-cultural learning that began during Specialist programs, as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

⁸ Specialist, curriculum design.

6.0 Specialist Program's Contribution to Cross-Cultural Learning and Mutual Understanding

One of the goals of the Specialist Program is to strengthen cross-cultural exchanges and learning. The evaluation results demonstrate that the program does indeed contribute to this area. In the survey, nearly all the respondents (97 percent) shared the perception that their work as an English Language Specialist had “contributed to opportunities for cross-cultural learning” (either a “significant” or “moderate” amount). Furthermore, both Specialists and host country interviewees provided examples of how the program has contributed to cultural learning and the impacts it has made.

Language helps you to crash barriers between people, between countries. And Americans teach all of this.

–University administrator, Russia

6.1 Host Country Participants Learn about U.S. Culture

By interacting with Specialists, host country participants have the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of U.S. culture.

First, as mentioned in Section 2.4, Specialists sometimes shared aspects of U.S. culture as part of their teacher training or presentations. For example, a university dean in Thailand noted that some Specialists had incorporated U.S.-produced cartoons into workshops on teaching English to young learners,¹ while a university professor in Turkey mentioned a training session that involved discourse analysis of a speech by President Obama, which deepened participants’ understanding of U.S. politics.²

Furthermore, Specialists also shared information about their personal lives and families, both during training sessions and in informal conversations. Such anecdotes provided a window into U.S. society and life in the United States for host country residents who had never been to the country.

I gave many different talks based on the needs of each audience. ... With young children, I talked about my own son’s typical day, his favorite sports, foods, etc.

–Specialist, teacher training

[Specialists] speak about their jobs or their families, and this is very important for our teachers and for my colleagues. ... Sometimes if our teachers ask such questions about their life, they can show pictures or maybe videos or maybe give some examples which are useful to understand the US and the culture.

–University professor/Professional association representative, Russia

As such, some evaluation respondents pointed out that Specialists had helped to broaden local participants’ understanding of the diversity of U.S. society and thus to break down commonly held stereotypes.

In Chile, I think the general tendency is to view the United States in a biased way. ... But when these [Specialists] come, they show us the reality that the United States is not just [about

¹ University dean, Thailand.

² University professor, Turkey.

money], but it's also a lot of culture. You see contributions and also insights into different kinds of contexts and realities, including very deprived ones. Then, of course, the view changes, and they have a much broader view.

—University administrator, Chile

[The program] was teaching English, but also American culture, literature, and politics in relation to teaching English. ... Staying away from stereotyping, when you talk about culture, there isn't just one American culture. There are so many different cultures within American culture.

—University professor, Turkey

In Pakistan, participants told me they had never known an American before, and they felt that having worked with several of us, they were wrong in their original ideas about Americans.

—Specialist, teacher training

6.2 Specialists Learn about Host Country Cultures

The program affords U.S.-based Specialists the opportunity to visit countries or regions to which they have never been or about which they may not have much previous knowledge. Just as host country participants gain a window into U.S. society through interacting with Specialists, the latter have a unique opportunity to interact closely with “like-minded”³ host country nationals in their own environment. Indeed, one survey respondent wrote, “To be a visiting Specialist is the best way to see a foreign country,”⁴ and another appreciated being able to “visit places with a non-tourist perspective.”⁵ In fact, nearly all surveyed Specialists (95 percent) agreed that the program had enabled them to gain “significant new insights into different countries, cultures, or societies.” Some Specialists deemed the knowledge they had gained about their host countries even more important than the professional knowledge they had imparted to their counterparts:

Bringing our version of knowledge to another culture is good; taking home even a glimmer of what they are all about is better.

—Specialist, teacher training

The greatest benefits from participation in this program have accrued to me, in raising my own intercultural awareness and in opportunities to interact with nationals in the countries the program has taken me to. I value what I have offered, and it has been valued by those who received it; but even more I value what I have received.

—Specialist, materials/textbook development

6.3 Cross-Cultural Learning Contributes to Mutual Understanding

Most of the evaluation respondents who commented on the program's contribution to cultural learning emphasized that the cross-cultural learning and sharing between Specialists and host country participants was the most important aspect. This finding came up again and again throughout the evaluation.

Rich cross-cultural learning and relationships developed across continents have made my experiences invaluable.

—Specialist, teacher training/curriculum

The university students [were] so eager to both learn new things and to share their culture with me.

—Specialist, teacher training

³ Specialist, teacher training.

⁴ Specialist, teacher training.

⁵ Specialist, instructional technology.

[Specialists] bring with them the culture, the feeling, what they think—everything. And we share too. They learn Thai culture, and people here learn American culture.

—University administrator, Thailand

Another recurring theme among the surveyed Specialists was their belief that increased mutual understanding between the peoples of the United States and host countries is a major result of the Specialist Program.

The Specialist Program is an important means of strengthening relations between the US and host countries.

—Specialist, teacher training

[The program] reaps tremendous return in ELT gains and cultural exchange. [It] helps build lasting bridges between the US and host countries.

—Specialist, instructional technology

These [programs] are fantastic opportunities for U.S. citizens to take diplomacy to a people-to-people level. A great learning opportunity for both sides.

—Specialist, instructional technology

Some host country interviewees shared this view. For example, a university writing center coordinator in Turkey stated, “This is how we can make the world small, not the politicians.”⁶

In sum, evaluation respondents emphasized that the Specialist Program model of bringing together U.S. citizens and host country nationals who have a shared professional interest helps participants to focus on their similarities rather than their differences. A university administrator in Turkey summed it up: “You really see how similar you are in many ways, and of course you don’t focus on the differences.”⁷

⁶ University writing center coordinator, Turkey.

⁷ University administrator, Turkey.

7.0 Program Impact on Specialists' Professional Development

Participation in the Specialist Program resulted in multiple professional benefits for nearly all the surveyed Specialists, as illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Impacts of Specialist Program on Specialists' Professional Lives

		Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Total
Knowledge Gains	Acquired significant new insights into different countries, cultures or societies that I would not have had otherwise	8%	87%	95%
	Gained deeper insights into the issues/challenges that impact English language teaching around the world	14%	82%	96%
Knowledge/Experience Applicable to Specialists' Work	Experiences have allowed me to enrich my teaching/work in TESOL/TEFL with concrete examples from my assignments	14%	77%	91%
	Better prepared to meet the needs of English language professionals in countries with little exposure to American pedagogies/American English	19%	77%	96%
Other Professional Benefits and New Directions	More interested/motivated to pursue research/work opportunities outside the United States	21%	68%	89%
	Have had new opportunities to educate/inform the general public about my work in TESOL/TEFL	28%	49%	77%

n=145–148

Most surveyed Specialists learned a great deal about both the cultures and societies of the countries they visited (87 percent) and issues affecting English language teaching around the world (82 percent).

[The program] gives teachers an opportunity to step outside the situation in their home institutions and see where some of their students come from. It gives greater insight into the huge industry of English language teaching. It is also very eye-opening to see the challenges many teachers face, and to learn about the varying policies countries have for learning English.

–Specialist, teacher training

The Specialist Program ... has provided me the opportunity to share knowledge, learn about different modes of teaching, different issues in teacher preparation, and the lively exchange of experiences around the world.

–Specialist, teacher training

7.1 Increased Intercultural Knowledge Applicable to Specialists' Work

Given that working in the field of TESOL/TEFL typically involves regular interaction with nationals of non-English-speaking countries, the vast majority of Specialists agreed that their

increased knowledge of host country cultures and TEFL environments was directly applicable to their work.

In particular, as shown in Figure 9, more than three-quarters (77 percent) of survey respondents reported that the ability to use “concrete examples from assignments” had enriched their teaching or other TEFL work “to a great extent.” In this vein, one respondent wrote, “The Specialist Program is extremely useful ... [in] helping American professionals internationalize their experience, which can then be directly transmitted to their TESL¹/TEFL students in the USA.”² Another Specialist observed that the experience of working as a trainer in a foreign setting (China) had helped her to relate better to her students, which improved her classroom teaching:

One major benefit for me was once again putting myself in the place of a language learner. ... Being illiterate and unable to communicate outside of the university where I was conducting training (in English), despite my educational level, was a real learning experience for me, and I believe helped me be a more compassionate teacher.

–Specialist, student learning outcomes

Likewise, 77 percent of Specialists felt that their experiences, to a great extent, had made them “better prepared to meet the needs of English language professionals in countries with little exposure to American pedagogies or American English.” Those who work as international trainers or program administrators found this skill especially applicable to their work:

I learned a great deal with each [Specialist] experience, which has, in turn, contributed a great deal to my teacher training efforts with international groups of teachers coming to the US for teacher training programs.

–Specialist, teacher training

A couple of my Specialist tours were so demanding (intensive programs in India and Saudi Arabia) that I was forced to create new materials [and to] adjust and adapt significantly during the courses to meet the needs of the local participants. These grueling programs made me a better international trainer and more receptive to different educational cultures.

–Specialist, classroom management

Since our university MATESOL program hosts many international Fulbright students from developing countries, and I am now the director of that program, I feel that serving as an English Language Specialist both allows me to utilize the insights I have developed as program director, and in turn enriches those insights.

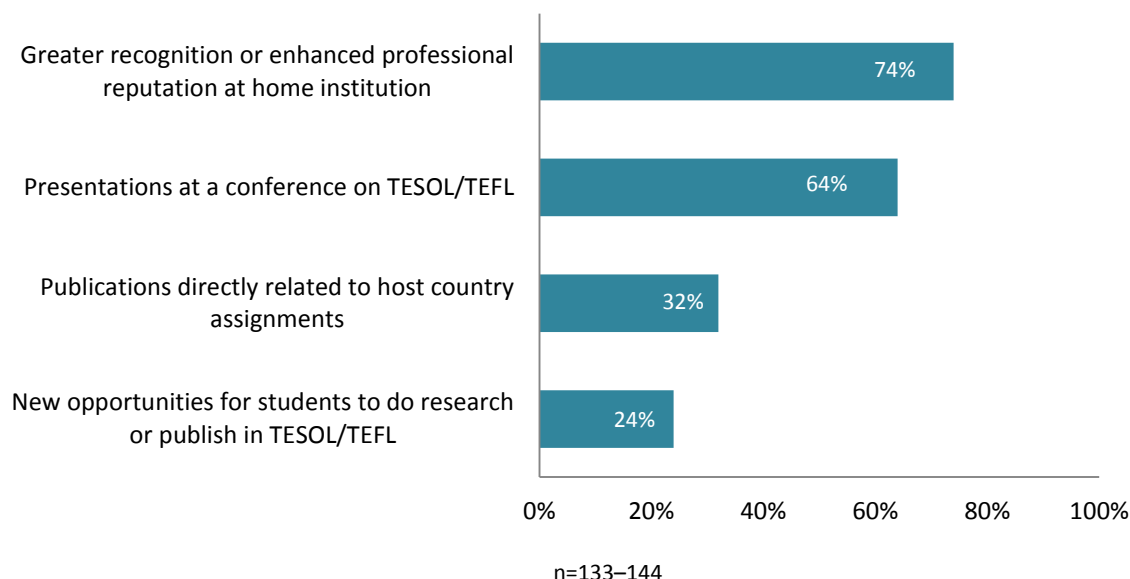
–Specialist, teacher training

7.2 Enhanced Professional Reputation and New Opportunities

In addition to enriching their work as educators or trainers, most surveyed Specialists indicated that participation in the Specialist Program had resulted in various other professional benefits, such as those shown in Figure 10. Most notably, three-quarters (74 percent) of Specialists agreed that program participation had brought them greater recognition or an enhanced professional reputation at their home institutions.

¹ TESL: Teaching English as a Second Language.

² Specialist, ESP.

Figure 10. Professional Benefits for Specialists Resulting from Program Participation

Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of survey respondents reported having given conference presentations as a result of their program experience, most typically at TESOL International, as discussed in Section 5.2. A few Specialists also gave examples of gaining new opportunities to present at other professional conferences, either in North America or abroad:

I have also been to a number of conferences in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, [and] Costa Rica that were not Specialist gigs but did come about as a partial result of connections I have made as an English Language Specialist. –Specialist, teacher training

I have presented to my colleagues at work and to both my local BC TEAL [British Columbia Teachers of English as an Additional Language] Conference and the Cambodian Cam TESOL Conference on activities that I've done during my Specialist assignments. –Specialist, teacher training

Furthermore, a third (32 percent) of respondents reported that their program experience had resulted in publications. In addition to the joint publications detailed in Section 5.2, in some cases Specialists had opportunities to publish their work in magazines or books edited or authored by host country colleagues. In this vein, one university professor in Russia who edits a pedagogical magazine mentioned that following a Specialist visit, that Specialist had contributed articles to her magazine.³ Along the same lines, a couple of Specialists noted that host country colleagues had invited them to contribute to book publications. Specifically, one survey respondent noted that a colleague in Algeria had “included [the Specialist] in his own publication of creative writing in ESL for young people,”⁴ while another respondent, after conducting technology-related training in the Middle East, was invited to contribute an article on the subject to a handbook for Arabic language teaching.⁵

³ University professor, Russia.

⁴ Specialist, classroom communication.

⁵ Specialist, instructional technology.

In addition to publishing their own work, one-quarter (24 percent) of survey respondents were able to leverage the activities and contacts they had developed as Specialists to provide new research or publication opportunities for their students.

Some Specialists also mentioned other opportunities that had resulted from their assignments, such as other teaching experiences abroad. For example, one Specialist wrote, “As a direct result of the Bangladesh experience, [I] conducted similar workshops in Ghana (Ashesi University) in 2012.”⁶

7.3 New Research and Career Directions

Lastly, for some Specialists, participation in the Specialist Program spurred them to pursue new directions in their research agenda or their career. In fact, the vast majority (89 percent) of the surveyed Specialists agreed that the program had increased their interest and motivation to pursue subsequent research or work opportunities outside the United States, two-thirds (68 percent) to “a great extent.” (See fig. 9.) However, a few Specialists pointed out that they already had a long-standing interest in professional opportunities abroad or substantial experience working abroad.

When I said the Specialist Program did not help me get interested in opportunities abroad, it’s because I was already interested in that ... before I became a Specialist.

–Specialist, sociolinguistics

My desire to work internationally ... was quite high already.

–Specialist, teacher training

Nonetheless, as discussed elsewhere, many Specialists—especially those who had completed fewer assignments—became deeply invested in the development of the TEFL field in their host countries or regions. In some cases, this resulted in a shift in focus in their research or other career plans.

Of particular value were the experiences with colleagues in this country. Their stories helped me carve out a prospectus for a Fulbright. The Fulbright later helped me design teacher training experiences for new pre-service teachers in Central Africa. Such was also fodder for research on the topic. Such has now become a research agenda I would like to pursue for the remainder of my career.

–Specialist, teacher training

Another Specialist, following an assignment in Iceland in 2004, returned to the country as a trainer several times and eventually received a Fulbright scholarship to continue working with the English Department at the University of Iceland.⁷

Some Specialists stated that the program had been one of the greatest influences on their professional development.

⁶ Specialist, materials/textbook development.

⁷ Specialist, teacher training specialist.

There is nothing quite like working as an English Language Specialist. It's the most fulfilling aspect of my professional life and has certainly contributed in a major way to my own professional development.

—Specialist, curriculum design

8.0 Conclusions

The Specialist Program provides a unique professional opportunity for both host country participants and Specialists, which has resulted in improvements to English language teaching in many countries, while fostering mutual understanding through long-term relationships and collaborations between U.S. citizens and their professional counterparts abroad.

Close coordination between RELOs and host country institutions in designing Specialist programs facilitates Specialists' ability to make a lasting impact on English instructors, classrooms and institutions in host countries, and sometimes on the broader TEFL community or profession, in the span of just a few weeks. Furthermore, host country interviewees emphasized that Specialists bring a creative, interactive, open-minded approach to their workshops, which facilitates sharing of ideas and collaborative strategizing of practical ways to apply and adapt new teaching methodologies to the host country context.

Significant impacts on English language teaching abroad during the evaluation period include the following:

- Increased capacity and interest in both student-centered learning and the use of Web-based resources in TEFL classrooms across the globe;
- Revised curricula or assessment procedures at English teaching institutions or faculties, often incorporating principles of student-centered teaching;
- Development of the Unified State Exam for the English language in Russia, which also influenced the design of unified exams for other foreign languages; and
- New or stronger associations for English language professionals, such as a new TESOL chapter in Iraq and a network of English grammar instructors in Chile.

Specialists also stressed that assignments are enriching professional opportunities, which provide them with an inside view of English teaching in other countries, introduce them to a new network of international colleagues and help them to enhance their effectiveness as TEFL instructors or trainers. Furthermore, program participation led to Specialists attaining greater prestige at their home institutions, as well as new professional opportunities such as conference presentations, publications, additional teaching assignments abroad or new research projects.

In addition, the intensive nature of Specialist programs—which often involve Specialists and small groups of host country professionals working together closely for 1 or 2 weeks—fosters a lively cultural exchange between U.S. visitors and their host country counterparts, which takes place both during and outside of training sessions. Both Specialists and local participants gained a window into each other's cultures, which, according to many respondents, contributed to mutual understanding. The vast majority of Specialists continued their cross-cultural exchanges by staying in touch with their new contacts, often developing long-lasting, mutually enriching professional relationships and/or collaborations.