

World Language Tables

*Engaging multilingual
English learning support students
in campus leadership*

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Setting

- 4-year public undergraduate institution
- State college, mid-size
- Current enrollment: ca. 12,000
- Highly diverse student population (*US News & World Report* ranking)
- Located in metropolitan Atlanta



Research Background



Supporting multilingual (ESL) students' cultural identity and heritage languages (HL):

- Importance of curricula in supporting and affirming HL students' cultural heritage (Harklau, 2009, 2016).
- Appreciative inquiry approach to understanding how ESL university students conceptualize success (Rowntree, Zufferey, & King, 2016).
- Common frameworks for assessing L2 proficiency applied to HL speakers, noting need for more systematic research into HL speakers of less commonly taught languages—LCTLs (Son, 2017).
- Supporting the cultural identities of Latinx students in higher education, with focus on the intersection of language and culture (Montgomery, et al., 2018).
- Resources for supporting HL students: <http://nhlrc.ucla.edu/nhlrc> (National Heritage Language Resource Center, 2019).

Service learning and multilingual students:

- How campus services for ESL students can encourage their involvement in college life and enhance their satisfaction (Zhou & Cole, 2017).
- Research confirming the ability of community service-learning engagement to enhance multilingual students' learning and experiences (Pascual y Cabo, Prada, & Pereira, 2017).
- Research into the variability in L2 proficiency among heritage language learners, with recommendation to provide service learning opportunities as an *ecological resource* to enhance learning among HLSs (Tocaimaza-Hatch & Walls, 2017).

Research Questions



1. How has participation in language exchange and language based learning communities grown?
2. How does participation in these programs affect the cultural and linguistic self-awareness of multilingual students?
3. To what extent does participation promote development (further learning and leadership) by multilingual students?

World Language Tables



- Regular campus event, collaborative
- GGC Students:
 - International students
 - EAP students (residents)
 - Other GGC students
- Heritage language speakers (HLS)
- Other Language Table participants
- Building and maintaining community through language learning
- **Approach to assessment**

Language Based Learning Communities



- 3 linked first-year courses with an integrative learning experience (LCs = campus strategic priority).
- Include a First Year Seminar (FYS) class.
- Last 3 semesters:
 - SP 18: One LC (EAP/ESL) = 14 students
 - FA 18: Three LCs (EAP/ESL) = 40 students
 - SP 19: Four LCs – 3 EAP/ESL and 1 Spanish = 48 students
- Majority multilingual (ESL) or heritage language (HLS)
- Other participants
- Building and maintaining community through language learning
- **Approach to assessment**

Growth of World Language Tables



- Finding space
- Obtaining approvals
- Establishing practices and processes
- Recruiting participants
- Growing the program
- Assessing participation
- Improvement cycle / Active feedback loop

World Language Tables Participation



- 2 World Language Table events per semester (e.g., 2 each in Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Fall 2018; 2 more set for Spring 2019 in April).
- About 70-75 participants per WLT event (trending higher), with most being current GGC (undergraduate) students.
- Total participants for this study: Approximately 390 survey invitations from last 6 Language Tables sent. Responses at 151 so far (39% response rate).

Language Tables Survey: Initial Questions



- 1. How many Language Tables events have you attended?
a. 1 b. 2 c. 3-4 d. 5 or more
- 2. Which language(s) other than English can you speak?
- 3. If you speak another language in addition to English, how well can you speak it?
- 4. Which Language Table(s) did you participate in at this Language Tables event?

Survey Instrument: Perspective Questions



- When learning about or practicing world languages at the Language Tables, I felt closer to my cultural heritage.
- I was able to learn about another world language at the Language Tables event.
- I would recommend the Language Tables event to my friends.
- I learned something about another culture at the Language Tables event.
- After the Language Tables event, I am more likely to study another world language.
- Which language(s), if so? _____

Survey Instrument: Follow-up Questions



- My favorite thing about the Language Tables event was...
- One thing that could be improved about the Language Tables event is...



Results of Survey (1)



- 1. How many Language Tables events have you attended?
a. 1 **52.8%** b. 2 **22.2%** c. 3-4 **16.7%** d. 5 or more **8.3%**
- 2. Which language(s) other than English can you speak?
French **25%**; Spanish **25%**; Mandarin Chinese **13.9%**;
Vietnamese **13.9%**; Russian **8.3%**; Haitian Creole **5.6%**;
Korean **5.6%**; Bosnian, German, Ibo, Italian, Mbili, Portuguese,
Swahili, Taiwanese *all* **2.8%** (1 respondent each)
- 3. If you speak another language in addition to English, how well can you speak it? If more than one, describe the strongest: Native speaker or highly fluent **53%**, Advanced learner **22%**, Intermediate **9%**, Beginner: **16%**
- 4. Which Language Table(s) did you participate in at this event?
Spanish (**36.1%**), Mandarin Chinese (**33.3%**), French (**30.6%**), Japanese (**25%**),
Portuguese (**13.9%**), Italian (**11.1%**), Vietnamese (**11.1%**), German (**8.3%**),
Russian (**8.3%**), Turkish (**5.6%**), Arabic (**2.8%**), Taiwanese (**2.8%**)

Results of Survey (2): Experience

- When learning about or practicing world languages at the Language Tables, I felt closer to my cultural heritage. 3.78
- I was able to learn about another world language at the Language Tables event. 4.25
- I would recommend the Language Tables event to my friends. 4.47
- I am able to read in a language other than English. 4.78
- I am comfortable speaking a language other than English in public settings. 4.33
- It is good for parents/caregivers to teach their children how to speak other languages. 4.83
- I learned something about another culture at the Language Tables event. 4.25
- After the Language Tables event, I am more likely to study another world language. 3.69
- Which language(s), if so? Arabic, French, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, *unsure*

Results of Survey (3): Follow-up Questions



- My favorite thing about the Language Tables event was...
- One thing that could be improved about the Language Tables event is...
- Any comment or suggestion you would like to share?

Selected Comments – Favorite things: *absence of stress, Learning other cultures, taking time to get to know other GGC community members who love languages. Make more friends. Know about another cultural. Have a fun time.*

To improve: *The structure. Perhaps have a few more people teaching languages. Divide professors into each tables more clearly. The guy from my table was late. Guidance/suggestions for moderators. It's a little tricky to know what to do with total beginners and native speakers around the same table. more snacks to keep the conversation going!*

Qualitative Data: Interviews



- My favorite thing about the Language Tables event was...
- One thing that could be improved about the Language Tables event is...
- One way to have more students leading or hosting Language Tables would be...
- Any other comment or suggestion that you would like to share about Language Tables?

Interviewees (6):

5 students: French, Spanish (2), Vietnamese (2)

1 staff: Spanish

Qualitative Data: Interview Responses (1)



My favorite thing about the Language Tables event was...

- The variety of languages and cultures was inspiring.
- No one was judging others; everyone wanted to help the others learn about their language and culture. Since it was my first one, I liked to just observe and watch.
- Learning something new was fun. I think most people enjoyed it.
- It was very cool, even though not so many people were at my table.
- I made some friends at my table. I think it is good to remind people about the languages on campus.
- There were some languages that I cannot study myself at GGC. I like that I could change from one table to another one.

Qualitative Data: Interview Responses (2)



One thing that could be improved about the Language Tables event is...

- We need more publication (publicity). And I think it should be in a bigger room (space).
- If we have more ideas about talking topics, that would be good. Not just learn some words.
- When the table leader left from my table, it was boring, so just need to be sure we have more table leaders, especially more professors.
- There should be more music, and more food.
- Holding it at the plaza (outdoors) might make more people stop by.
- You can combine this with Hispanic Heritage month or Chinese, Vietnamese New Year. Also, music will make it more exciting.

Qualitative Data: Interview Responses (3)



One way to have more students leading or hosting Language Tables would be...

- Give t-shirts for the table leaders, like red, blue, yellow for different languages. Also, having more food will get more students and more table leaders.
- We can build interest more for students to lead by giving them materials to have at the tables.
- Spread the word to RSOs (registered student organizations) like OLAS (Organization of Latin American Students), ASA (Asian Student Association), or African Voice. Some of the leaders can host a table.
- Project languages onto a screen and give exposure to the leaders and make them proud of the language.
- We should get the strong students from the language classes, too.
- Give us some lessons to teach at the tables. I think it will help.

Qualitative Data: Interview Responses (4)



Any other comment or suggestion?

- I hope we will do more Language Tables.
- If we make it more like a fun event, combined with learning, it's good.
- I will definitely go to the Language Tables again. I did not know about it until someone told me.
- I heard about the Language Tables before, but this is the first one I attended. I think we need more to spread the word.
- Students can teach at the tables; I like that.
- Music and food. If we can have more people, like a bigger space, that will be great.

Implications of Findings



- Key Implications for multilingual students
- Key Implications for multilingual student development (learning and leadership)
- Key Implications for other campuses/environments
- Others...

Key Challenges



- Assessing leadership among multilingual students
- Meeting diverse needs
- Valuing and effectively using time of volunteers
- Assessing and improving the World Language Tables event (improvement cycle)
- Others...

Next Steps

- Increase frequency of events (based on feedback/demand).
- Provide opportunities for more/expanded student leadership.
- Systematize and connect events to facilitate growth and assessment (improvement cycle).
- Share with others widely.
- Others...



Questions & Discussion



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