📏 International House Language Conversation Tables

👥 Public

Name of Assessment Project:	International House Language Conversation Tables
Name(s) of Person(s) Responsible for Assessment Project:	Program Coordinator (Malou Amparo)
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Providing Department:	International House
Other Units/Departments Involved in Assessment Project:	

Program, Service, or Event Related to Assessment Project: The Language Conversation Tables (Language Tables) is a program developed and implemented by International House with support from the Non-Resident Student Engagement (NRSE) work group. The purpose and intent of the language tables is to facilitate social engagement, foster community, and promote language learning among the UC San Diego students, staff, and community members.

The Language Tables program is comprised of several different language tables that organize weekly meetings and activities related to learning and practicing a particular language. The Language Tables' primary audience is undergraduate students at UC San Diego, though a smaller number of graduate students and community members also participate. The language level of participants varies from beginners to native speakers/fluent speakers because the native-speakers/fluent speakers facilitate the conversation practice for learners of different levels.

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Language Tables organized 15 different language tables each quarter and had approximately 160-180 participants each quarter. Language Table participants include international students (4-year international students and exchange students), domestic U.S. students, staff, and community members. Language Table activities include movie nights, cooking classes, potlucks, Lunar New Year celebrations, and many others.

The I-House Program Coordinator oversees program development and implementation, advises and mentors the undergraduate Program Intern in charge of the program, manages the program's budget and expenses, identifies the program goals and assesses the learning outcomes.

Assessment Project Description: The main purpose of the assessment project was to assess participants' learning and engagement in the Language Tables. Due to the variety of structures and activities of each language table, the I-House Program Coordinator developed an online survey to administer to one language table as a sample.

Unit/Program Specific Goals and Learning Outcomes: The Language Tables program's learning outcomes are as follows:

As a result of participating in the Language Conversation Tables, participants will

- improve their conversational language skills
- enhance their familiarity and knowledge about other cultures
- communicate with people from cultures different from their own
- connect with other undergraduate students, graduate students, post-docs, and community members
- feel a sense of belonging with the UC San Diego community

Relationship to Student Affairs Learning Outcomes: Communicate Effectively, Advance a Plan for Personal, Academic, and Professional Success, Lead in a Diverse Global Society

Assessment Project Start: 6/6/2014

Assessment Project End: 8/15/2014

Population/Sample: Out of 23 participants in the German Table, 8 individuals completed the online survey. There were three respondents who did not participate in the German Table but their responses are not included in the data.

Type of Assessment: Student learning outcomes and/or behavioral outcomes

Other Assessment Type(s):

Assessment Methods: Surveys

Other Assessment Method(s):

Data Collection Tools: Online survey through Google Forms can be found here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19qfanALQpjMM-pxJC50lLSL0zYV9V5rm5cCgN9VbTJA/viewform

Data Analysis Methods: Data from the online survey was categorized to draw out themes and analyzed to measure the self-reported language learning and social engagement of the respondents.

Presentation of Findings: The I-House Program Coordinator used the findings to evaluate the Language Tables program and to make changes to the format and activities to better meet participants' expectations and achieve the identified learning outcomes. Findings will be shared with International House Director, Eleanor Roosevelt College Provost, and Non-Resident Student Engagement

workgroup.

Progress: 100%

Link Assessment Project in Campus Labs Baseline :

Name	Source
No items to display.	

Summary of Findings: One EAP international exchange student, 6 domestic U.S. undergraduate students, and one visiting scholar completed the survey.

As for frequency of attendance, 50% of respondents attended the German Table every week and the other 50% attended almost half of the time.

Responses to the close-ended choose all that apply question "Why did you choose to participate in the language table?" include: meeting other German speakers (7 responses), to learn/practice the language (6 responses), to socialize (6 responses), to teach others the language and culture (3 responses), to prepare to study abroad (2 responses), previous study in a country where the language is spoken (2 responses), to learn about another culture (responses), and to build confidence and self-esteem (2 responses).

Responses to the question "Did attending the language table conversation table help you to improve your conversational language skills?" on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 5 (A lot) are as follows: "Not much" 1 respondent, "Neutral" 4 respondents, "A little" 1 respondent, "A lot" 1 respondent.

Responses to the question "Through your participation in the language conversation table, did you learn more about other cultures?" on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 5 (A lot) are as follows: "Not much" 2 respondents, "Neutral" 2 respondents, "A little" 1 respondent, "A lot" 3 respondents.

Responses to the question "Did participating in the language conversation table help you feel more a part of the UCSD community?" on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 5 (A lot) are as follows: "Neutral" 2 respondents, "A lot" 6 respondents.

Responses to the question "Did attending the table help you connect and meet with other UCSD students, graduate students, post-docs, etc.?" on a scale of 1 (Not at all) are as follows: "A little" 3 respondents, "A lot" 5 respondents.

The themes that came out of responses to the question, "What did you enjoy about the conversation table?" include: language practice (5 responses), fun (4 responses), social engagement and meeting new people (3 responses), learning about other cultures (2 responses), educational value (1 response), and being part of a group (1 response).

The responses from the online survey showed that not all respondents improved their conversational language skills or learn more about other cultures, however most respondents felt more a part of the UCSD community and connected with other people as a result of participating in the German Table. The survey results indicate that the Language Table program is achieving some of its stated learning outcomes and is not successful in achieving some other learning outcomes.

Impact of Assessment: The assessment has shown that some learning outcomes are being achieved while others can be improved. As the Program Coordinator I need to evaluate the learning outcomes to determine which ones are the most important. Language practice is of course an important component of the Language Tables, however, the Language Tables are not designed as a language course. Participants might have expectations that are different from what the program can offer. I will revise the type of data collection tools that we use the next time we assess this program.

Lessons Learned: The individuals who responded to the online survey were active and frequent participants in the German Table. Most of them wanted to meet other German speakers, to practice the language, and socialize. These responses align with the purpose of the Language Tables, "to facilitate social engagement and promote language learning." This is one sample out of 15 different language tables. Each language table is different in terms of structure and activities so it is difficult to know what participants in other tables gained from the program.

The way in which the survey measured the degree of language improvement was not effective considering some participants are native-speakers or fluent in the language and therefore did not indicate improvement in their conversation skills. It would be better to create separate questions for non-native/fluent speakers and language learners. There are also other ways to measure and demonstrate language improvement, such as a rubric or pre-test and post-test. However, these methods are time consuming to administer and the purpose of the Language Tables is not to achieve fluency in a language (reading, writing, listening). There are several standardized rubrics to categorize language fluency that we can refer to if we decide that this is an important learning outcome to measure.

Supplemental Information:

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