

World Café

Overview:

This protocol intentionally connects multiple ideas and perspectives by engaging participants in several rounds of small-group conversation. Students discuss topics in small groups at tables, writing or drawing their ideas on a paper "tablecloth". Students then move to a new table for each round of discussion.

After the small group discussions have taken place, there is an opportunity for large group sharing and synthesis of the ideas.

Purpose:

The World Café method is particularly useful when you want to be sure to explore a topic from multiple perspectives, to ensure that everyone in a room contributes to a conversation, and/or when you want to encourage participants to make new connections.

Application: When and where can I use it?

World Café can be modified to meet a variety of needs. Specifics of context, content, numbers, purpose, location and other circumstances need to be factored into each use of this protocol. Secondary teachers will need to think carefully about the focus questions, group sizes, and number of rotations that are manageable and meaningful within a class period. If necessary, the discussion could take place over two class periods.

Part of this protocol involves students being able to respond to the focus question in each round through a combination of speaking, writing, drawing, or doodling allowing them the opportunity to express their thinking in manner that is comfortable and respectful of their preferences.

Getting Started: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

Start by creating a "special environment" in your classroom, to the extent possible. Arrange the seating into small groups such that four or five students can be sitting around a "café table". Cover each table with butcher paper to resemble a tablecloth (that the students can write on). Think about providing colored pens, a centerpiece and possibly a talking stick.

Welcome your students to their café and share the process they will be using, as well as the expected café etiquette.

Small-Group Rounds: The process begins with the first of three or more rounds of conversation for small groups of four (five maximum) people seated around a table. Allow enough time at each group for all group members to share their thoughts either aloud or in writing on the "tablecloth". At the end of the allocated time, each member of the group moves to a different new table. They may or may not choose to leave one

person as the “table host” for the next round, who welcomes the next group and briefly fills them in on what happened in the previous round.

Questions: Each round is prefaced with a **question** specially crafted for the specific context and desired purpose of the World Café. The same questions can be used for more than one round, or they may build upon each other to focus the conversation or guide its direction.

Harvest: After the small groups (and/or in between rounds, as needed), individuals are invited to share insights or other results from their conversations with the rest of the large group. The results may be charted in words or visually for all to see in the front of the room.

See this Instructional Move in action:

[World Cafe - YouTube](#)

Read more about this Instructional Move:

[World Cafe Method :: The World Cafe](#)

References:

The World Café: International Creative Commons [The World Cafe](#)