

WORLD CAFÉ

Informal learning around virtual tables

The World Café is a method designed to spread ideas and expand insights through sharing experience informally. Participants rotate around different spaces (virtual tables) and hold open and creative conversations encouraged by a café environment. Each round allows participants to create a web of collective knowledge around a defined topic. In this method, participants are considered sources of wisdom, and creating a constructive context around a table can draw valuable lessons.

Purpose: Online socialization, Knowledge construction

Group size: < 20, 21 - 50

Duration: 1 - 2 hours

Multilanguage fit: no

USE THIS METHOD:

- Evoke collective knowledge within a group of at least 12 experienced participants.
- Engage in collaborative problem-solving that cuts across standard constraints.
- Discover more new insights than with traditional panel presentations, due to its participatory nature.
- Generate meaningful interaction by limiting hierarchical distinctions.

Level of interaction: high

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STEPS TO APPLY THE METHOD: _____

Preparation

1. Identify and define the purpose of the learning activity and the topic to discuss.
2. Establish parameters to ensure that the session will foster creative discourse while remaining focused on the topic.
3. Plan the session around the number of participants and their characteristics.
 - The ideal number of participants per table is 4 to 6. Any more will stifle the opportunities to contribute, and any less will reduce the amount of experience that is shared.
 - Group participants with heterogeneous or homogeneous characteristics. Note: diversity in language, opinion, interest, geographic location, or demographic situation may hinder the exchange process.
4. Design a set of thought-provoking questions. Good questions may have many answers and allow the participants to examine the complexity of the topic discussed.
5. Define the tool you will use, familiarize yourself with its functionalities, and prepare the online space with breakout rooms (virtual tables).
 - Participants should be constantly encouraged to take notes, doodle, or create diagrams directly on the table during the session. Consider the use of a collaborative whiteboard or an annotation tool.

Delivery

Start the learning activity


1. Brief the participants and explain the learning activity, its purpose and the topic of discussion.
 - Introduce the topic and encourage participants to contribute their thoughts and ideas regularly during the learning activity, and to listen actively for interesting connections, patterns, or additional questions.
 - Participants are assigned to groups and distributed into breakout rooms (virtual tables).
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- In groups, participants hold conversations focused on key points directly related to a set of questions.
 - After some time, participants move to other rooms and focus on new topics and questions. This process is repeated a couple of times.
 - Each group elects an 'ambassador of meaning' who remains in the same room while other participants move to other rooms.
 - Ambassador of meaning's role: to keep track of key ideas, provide an overview for the next group, and steer them towards complementary thought processes to avoid repetition.
 - Participants and the facilitator gather in the main room to debrief.
 - Each table's 'ambassador of meaning' presents a synthesis and key reflection points gathered.
 - Introduce the tool to facilitate the learning activity (if using other tools). Include:
 - Name of the tool, participants' requirements. Note: Allocate time in your session for participants to try the selected tool if they are unfamiliar with it.
 - 2.** Assign participants to groups and distribute them into breakout rooms.
 - 3.** Allow each round of conversation to last 15 - 30 minutes. All participants don't need to spend time at each table. Note: Keep time and inform groups accordingly.
 - 4.** Gather all participants in the main room for a debrief.
 - 5.** Invite all 'ambassadors of meaning' to share the results of the conversations held at their table.
 - Allow time for other participants to add interesting points or further lessons learned after the debriefings.
 - Note: Cameras and microphones are enabled only for the facilitator and the 'ambassadors of meaning'.
 - 6.** Conclude the activity by.....
 - Provide key learning points in a supporting document or online for future reference by the participants.
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Recommendations:

- Assign the questions depending on the objectives of the learning activity. Asking groups to deal with different aspects of a problem, or providing diverse case studies to each, are just some ideas.
- Rename the learning activity for a specific learning purpose. Appropriate formulation of table questions and learning objectives can create a knowledge café, strategy café, discovery café, or other forums that connect participants.

TOOL TIPS:

Wonder.me

Gather.town

Workadventu.re

integrate with

Miro

Mural
