

## LEARNING EXCHANGE PROTOCOL

### World Café



*Note: All protocols have multiple origins. The strength of a protocol is in the ability of facilitators or planners to adjust/revise for use in your context. <http://www.nsrharmony.org/free-resources/protocols/a-z> is a good source of multiple protocols for school, district, community and organizational use.*

**Outcome:** Design and implement an interactive world café process in which the participants co-construct understandings and knowledge through iterative experiences with diverse participants and perspectives.

**Description:** As the graphic suggests, there are multiple purposes of the World Café. The process fosters gracious space ("create hospitable space"); it draws on diverse perspectives and sets up a space for equitable access/participation and diverse perspectives in the conversation. The salon atmosphere of the world café presumes that the participants will not remain at one table, but circulate (often more planned than might happen in a typical café situation) to other tables and ideas.

#### Theoretical Underpinnings

The World Café offers a tangible process for enacting opportunity to learn principles to promote equity and excellence. It promotes constructivist learning principles because it is interactive and relies on inter-subjectivity and scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) from diverse people and multiple settings, the necessary components for complex authentic and experiential learning.

## Resources

- ✳[http://www.kbs-frb.be/uploadedFiles/KBS-FRB/Files/EN/PUB\\_1540\\_Toolkit\\_13\\_WorldCafe.pdf](http://www.kbs-frb.be/uploadedFiles/KBS-FRB/Files/EN/PUB_1540_Toolkit_13_WorldCafe.pdf)
- <http://www.theworldcafe.com/method.html>
- <http://www.therightquestions.org/the-world-cafe-workshop-facilitation-method-principles-and-etiquette/#.VEAZWUtRFEo>

## Process

As with all processes, the specific implementation should be based on the principles and general design, but be customized for use by facilitators to achieve outcomes.

From [http://www.kbs-frb.be/uploadedFiles/KBS-FRB/Files/EN/PUB\\_1540\\_Toolkit\\_13\\_WorldCafe.pdf](http://www.kbs-frb.be/uploadedFiles/KBS-FRB/Files/EN/PUB_1540_Toolkit_13_WorldCafe.pdf) (p. 187)

*The job of the Café facilitator(s) is to see that the guidelines for dialogue and engagement are put into action. It is not the specific form, but living the spirit of the guidelines that counts. Hosting a Café requires thoughtfulness, artistry and care. The Café facilitator(s) can make the difference between an interesting conversation and breakthrough thinking. The responsibilities of the Café facilitator(s) include the following:*

- *work with the planning team to determine the purpose of the Café and decide who should be invited to the gathering*
- *name your Café in a way appropriate to its purpose help frame the invitation*
- *work with others to create a comfortable café environment*
- *work with café hosts to design an appropriate question* **A Powerful Question**
  - **is simple and clear**
  - **is thought provoking**
  - **generates energy**
  - **focuses collective inquiry**
  - **surfaces unconscious assumptions opens new possibilities**
  - **seeks what is useful**
- *welcome the participants as they enter*
- *explain the purpose of the gathering*
- *pose the question or themes for rounds of conversation and make sure that the question is visible to everyone*
- *on an overhead, flipchart or on cards at each table, explain the Café guidelines and Café etiquette, and post them on an overhead, an easel sheet or on cards at each table*
- *explain how the logistics of the Café will work, including the role of the 'table host' (the person who will volunteer to remain at the end of the first round and welcome newcomers to their table) move among the tables during the conversations encourage everyone to participate*
- *remind people to note key ideas, doodle and draw*
- *let people know in a gentle way when it is time to move and begin a new round of conversation*
- *make sure key insights are recorded visually or are gathered and posted if possible be creative in adapting the Café guidelines to meet the unique needs of your situation.*

## Implementation

Preparation: Each table has a large sheet of poster paper for participants to write on. If you want to go “all out”, you can set up a café environment with tablecloth, flowers, and/or refreshments. There is typically a facilitator/host at each table. However, you can decide if the table host remains for all conversation rounds. As with all movement protocols, it is important to make accommodations for persons with disabilities so they have access to full participation.

Groups of 4-6 join the conversation clusters.

- There will be **progressive** (three) **rounds of conversation** of approximately 8-12 minutes each the questions/topics co-designed with hosts of each table.
- **Questions or issues or thoughts that pertain** to the designated topic are explored.
- At each conversation cluster table, both hosts and members **WRITE, DOODLE AND DRAW KEY IDEAS** on the paper in the center of the group. Group members may take notes to “travel with”.
- Upon completing the initial round of conversation, one person remains at the table as the “host” while the others become travelers or “ambassadors of meaning.” The **TRAVELERS CARRY (CROSS-POLLINATE) KEY IDEAS, THEMES AND QUESTIONS INTO THEIR NEW CONVERSATIONS** that may inform meaning of the remaining chapters.
- **Table hosts** should welcome the new guests and briefly share the main ideas, themes and questions of the initial conversation. Guests should **LINK AND CONNECT IDEAS** coming from their previous table conversations—listening carefully and building on each other's contributions.
- By providing opportunities for cohort members to move in several rounds of conversation, **ideas, questions, and themes begin to link and connect.**

After the three rounds of conversation, share discoveries and insights in a **whole group conversation**. This is a town meeting-style conversation in which patterns can be identified, collective knowledge is ‘harvested’, and possibilities for new and applied meanings emerge.

### Café Etiquette

**Focus** on what matters  
**Contribute** your thinking  
**Speak** your mind  
**Listen** to understand  
**Link and connect** ideas  
**Listen together** for insights and deeper questions  
**Play, Doodle, Draw** – writing on the paper is important!