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#### 4.2.4 World Café

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Based on seven principles, the World Café method offers a versatile and powerful format for facilitating large group dialogue. Each component of the method serves a distinct purpose and aligns with other design principles. The flexibility of the World Café allows for customization to suit diverse requirements and contexts. Whether used in educational, organizational, or community settings, the World Café can be modified to effectively engage participants and foster meaningful conversations that lead to collective learning and collaborative action. In this chapter, we will describe the basics of the World Café method and provide a selection of recommended reading materials for those interested in further exploring this pedagogical approach.

The World Café method is a pedagogical approach that fosters collaborative and social learning, leading to the creation of collective intelligence. It serves as an effective tool for promoting mutual understanding by establishing an inclusive and collaborative network of conversations. The method facilitates discussions on a single topic from multiple perspectives through successive rounds of conversation. This iterative process allows for diverse viewpoints to be shared, explored, and integrated (Brown & Isaacs, 2005.).



**The World Café fosters collaborative and social learning, leading to the creation of collective intelligence.**

The World Café method is structured as a series of brief, typically 20–30-minute, small group discussions that involve rotating participants between different tables, each focusing on a specific topic or question within a broader theme. Throughout the activity, each table has a designated host who welcomes the group, provides an overview of the topic, and summarizes key points raised by previous participants. The groups spend a limited amount of time at each table, and there is no expectation for a group to completely clear the table for the next group. Instead, the subsequent group builds upon the notes and ideas left by the previous group, adding their own insights and expanding on the discussion (Brown & Isaacs, 2005.)

To conclude the World Café session, a wrap-up discussion, also known as the “harvest,” takes place at the end of the session. The host takes responsibility for reporting the outcomes of the activity, although all participants are encouraged to share the insights they gained from the discussions (Ropes et al., 2020; Brown & Isaacs, 2005). The World Café method is flexible in its implementation but relies on seven key principles (Figure 19) (Brown & Isaacs, 2005).



**Figure 19.** The seven principles of the World Café method. (Brown & Isaacs, 2005, modified).

The first principle of the World Café method is to create a welcoming and pleasant atmosphere by setting up the physical space in a café-style arrangement with chairs around tables. This helps create a comfortable and informal environment for participants to engage in discussions. The second principle of the World Café method involves setting the context for the discussion by providing relevant background information. The third principle emphasizes the importance of framing questions that prompt meaningful exploration of the topic, e.g., “What does this mean?”, or “What do you think about this?” These questions should encourage participants to delve deeper into the subject matter, reflect on their own perspectives, and generate insightful discussions. (Brown & Isaacs, 2005.)

The next principle emphasizes the importance of encouraging active participation from everyone around the table. Strategies to achieve this may include creating space and opportunities for all participants to speak, actively encouraging quieter individuals to express their opinions, and fostering an environment of active listening and respect for different viewpoints. The World Café method also aims to bring together diverse perspectives and foster the cross-pollination of ideas. Participants rotate between tables, allowing for the integration of ideas and perspectives from different groups. By actively listening to others, participants can identify patterns, gain insights, and explore deeper questions that may emerge from the collective conversation (Brown & Isaacs, 2005.)

Finally, the work produced by each table is shared with all participants, providing a comprehensive view of the topic. This collective sharing ensures that valuable insights, ideas, and discoveries from each group are disseminated, contributing to a broader understanding of the subject matter (Brown & Isaacs, 2005.)

There are several advantages to using the World Café method. Firstly, it allows the teacher to facilitate dialogue in a large group by breaking it into smaller groups, without the participants having to prepare in advance. (Brown & Isaacs, 2005). Additionally, the World Café method has been found to be effective in nursing and medical education. It provides an opportunity for students to explore different areas of interest in greater depth, fostering communication, relationship-building, and collaborative learning skills (van Wyngaarden et al., 2018.) Through reflection and meaningful conversations, the method enables participants to gain a deeper understanding of the topic and generate new insights. It also extends networks and serves as a catalyst for future action and motivation (Ropes et al., 2020.)

In the DigiCare project, we employed the World Café method during workshops with teachers to develop the DigiCare Model and learning packages. By creating a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, we fostered an open discussion that encouraged participants to freely share their perspectives and expertise. The World Café method played a pivotal role in stimulating innovative thinking and encouraging participants to explore new ideas and approaches. It allowed us to break away from traditional modes of thinking and generate fresh insights and perspectives.

The DigiCare Learning Packages (Appendix 7) contain some ideas for implementing the World Café method in DigiCare training and in healthcare education in general.

### Read more about the World Café

The World Café TM. (n.d.). Shaping Our Futures Through Conversations That Matter. <https://theworldcafe.com/>

The World Café. (n.d.). Significance of virtual World Cafés. <https://www.worldcafe.eu/en/virtual-world-cafe/>

## References

Brown, J., & Isaacs, D. (2005). The World Café: shaping our futures through conversations that matter. Berrett-Koehler

Ropes, D., Van Kleef, H., & Douven, G. (2020). Learning in The World Café: An empirical evaluation. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 32(4), 303–316. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JWL-10-2019-0126>

Van Wyngaarden, A., Leech, R., & Coetzee, I. M. (2018). Assessing the value of action research: Using a world café to explore the professional journey of nurse educators. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 32(6). <https://doi.org/10.20853/32-6-2974>