DEZERNAT
STUDIUM UND LEHRE

UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

WORLD CAFÉ

Purpose

The *World Café* (or "Knowledge Café") was developed to make individual student participation possible even in very large groups, to organize large-scale discussions, and to record their results.

The intended aim of *World Cafés* is to provide a structure that allows for multiple perspectives to be heard. Differing views and approaches to a specific topic can be discussed and explored in a non-judgmental, cooperative manner. Participants learn about each other and their various ideas in relation to a given topic and practice questioning traditional views, discussing constructively, brainstorming ideas, and developing initial solutions to numerous problems from different perspectives.

Space is provided for all participants to speak about different topics that matter to them personally. In this manner, *World Cafés* foster participants' self-regulatory and self-organizational skills and explicitly highlight the advantage of working in groups.

This strategy was originally developed for a business context by Juanita Brown and David Isaacs, e.g. to help monitor and realize change processes. The technique is now often found in the context of conferences or conventions.

Directions

Each group of four to six students is assigned a table. A large sheet of paper covers the table as a kind of tablecloth. Permanent markers of various colors are available at each table as well.

The instructor explains the directions and provides an overview of the different tasks:

a) Every table needs a host. The hosts remain at the table throughout the whole activity and ensure that participants speak to each other respectfully and productively. The hosts are also responsible for connecting the dots between the different discussion rounds. They ensure that all conclusions drawn in each discussion round are recorded on the paper 'tablecloth'.
b) All other participants are required to switch to a new table after each discussion round (~15-20min.).
c) The instructor presents the different questions or issues to be discussed at each table and assigns hosts for each table. Every 15 to 20 minutes, the instructor indicates with an audible signal that participants are to switch to a new table. Participants should switch up their groups after each round and not travel from table to table in the same group. Instead, they should choose tables based on which questions interest them the most. Mixing up the groups in this way will expose participants to more opinions and perspectives.
d) After two or three discussion rounds, the results are presented to the whole group. Participants reflect on what they have been hearing or reading through a discussion with the whole group or through a gallery walk (< 5 tables). If possible, topics that allow for more complex discussions than others should be prioritized.

The most important part is that individual tables are focused on suitable topics relevant to the participants. The instructor, a planning committee, or the whole group (40 people max.) can design the structure and questions in advance.

Parameters	Group size:	12-300 people (large-group facilitation)
	Time required:	2-3 discussion rounds of 15-20 minutes each; ca. 90 minutes in total
	Setup:	enough space for tables and moveable chairs
	Materials:	tables with large piece of paper to write on; markers in various colors; timer/bell

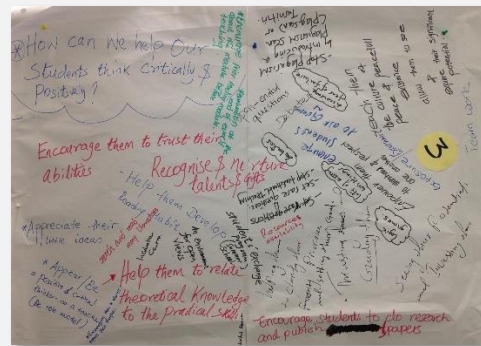| Helpful Tips	Examples:

Image 1: World Café discussion groups

Image 2 Results from one table

Online Implemen-tation	— via breakout rooms in heiCONF (should be set up so that participants can move freely from room to room as long as one host remains in each breakout room)

Adapted from:
Brown, J., & Isaacs, D. (2005). *The world café: Shaping our futures through conversations that matter*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
Brown, J., Isaacs, D., & Bürger, S. (2007). *Das World Café kreative Zukunftsgestaltung in Organisationen und Gesellschaft*. Heidelberg: Carl-Auer-Verl.
Scholz, R., & Haussmann, M. (2018). *Lernlandkarte Nr. 2 - World Café*. Eichenzell: Neuland GmbH & KG.