

Teachers' manual – “World Café”

“Barriers and Facilitators to Health Literacy and Digital Health Literacy”

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Benefits and Applications

The World Café method enriches lectures by fostering active student engagement, collaborative learning, and diverse perspectives. It encourages open dialogue in small groups, allowing students to explore complex topics in an informal setting. This participatory approach enhances critical thinking, communication skills, and knowledge retention. By rotating groups and sharing ideas, students benefit from peer learning and broaden their understanding beyond individual viewpoints. The method also creates a supportive environment where all voices can be heard, promoting inclusivity. Used in lectures, the World Café transforms passive listening into interactive knowledge construction, making learning more dynamic and impactful.

Process and Goals of the “World Café” Method

The World Café is an innovative and widely used participatory method developed to promote meaningful group discussions and cooperative dialogue. Its primary goal is to harness the collective intelligence and creativity of participants so that they can examine complex issues from different perspectives and jointly develop new insights, ideas or solutions.

Goals and purpose

At its core, the “World Café” aims to create an informal, café-like environment that encourages open communication, active listening and collaborative learning. This approach recognizes that valuable knowledge and creative solutions often emerge when people from different backgrounds, with different expertise and experiences, come together in a relaxed environment to discuss relevant issues. It supports the development of a common understanding of a topic while fostering relationships and trust among participants.

Process and structure

The method typically involves several rounds of small group discussions on a series of focused questions or topics. Participants are divided into small groups of about 4 to 6 people, each sitting at a table. Each table addresses a specific question or topic related to the overall theme of the event or workshop.

1. Initial preparation: Each table is equipped with materials such as flipcharts, paper, markers or digital note-taking tools to record key points. A table moderator or facilitator remains at the same table throughout all rounds to lead the discussion and record insights.

2. Rotating rounds: Participants engage in timed discussions, typically 15 to 20 minutes per round. After each round, participants move to different tables and join new groups and topics. This rotation allows for the exchange of ideas and exposes participants to a variety of perspectives.

3. Gathering insights: The table moderators share the highlights of the discussion so far with the newcomers to maintain continuity. Notes, sketches or mind maps are often used to visually document ideas.

4. Summary and reflection: After several rounds, the entire group comes back together to review and reflect on the joint results. The moderators summarize important topics, patterns and actionable insights, often using visual aids or digital tools to present the ‘results’ of the discussions.

Application example for the topic: “Barriers and Facilitators to Health Literacy and Digital Health Literacy”

General conditions

- Participants: 4–6 people per table
- Duration per round: approx. 15–20 minutes
- Number of rounds: 3 (or more)
- Topics: barriers, enabling factors, possible solutions

Instructions for implementation

1. Welcome and introduction: Briefly introduce the topic of health literacy and the World Café method.
2. Discussion rounds: Participants rotate to a new table after each round.
3. Taking notes: A moderator or one person at the table writes down the most important points.
4. Conclusion: Bringing the results together in a plenary session, visualisation if necessary.

Table 1: Barriers to Health Literacy and Digital Health Literacy

Question / Guide

1. What obstacles make it difficult for older people to access health information?
2. What factors cause health information to be hard to understand?
3. What social, cultural, or systemic barriers negatively affect health literacy?
4. Are there specific groups among older people who are particularly affected? Why?
5. What challenges do older people face when using digital tools or platforms to find health information?
6. How do digital skills, or the lack thereof, affect the understanding and use of online health information?

Table 2: Facilitators for Health Literacy and Digital Health Literacy

Question / Guide

1. What factors help older people better understand health information?
2. How can communication and information delivery be improved?
3. What role do educational programs, the healthcare system, and community play?
4. Are there successful examples or best practices?
5. Which digital tools, apps, or platforms support better health literacy?
6. How can digital skills training improve access to and understanding of health information?

Table 3: Solutions and Recommendations for Health Literacy and Digital Health Literacy

Question / Guide

1. What measures could reduce barriers?
2. How can facilitators be strengthened?
3. Who should be involved in implementation (institutions, professionals, community)?
4. What short-term and long-term goals should be set?
5. What strategies can improve digital inclusion and reduce the digital divide in health information access?
6. How can healthcare providers better support older adults in navigating digital health resources?