“Creating a positive future begins in human conversation. The simplest and most powerful investment any member of a community or an organization may make in renewal is to begin talking with other people as though the answers mattered.”

Adapted from *Who Will Tell the People*, by William Greider

**Learning Goals**
The World Café is an effort towards stimulating creative conversation about questions and issues that matter in students’ lives. Using the Café as a methodology and as a metaphor offers a practical and innovative way to cultivate both the knowledge required to thrive as young scholars and the wisdom needed to create promising futures in their respective career fields and the greater global community.

**Justification for World Café ~ Health Science 202f: Critical Thinking in Health Sciences**
Over the last four years as a Teaching Assistant in two mandatory second year Health Science courses, I believe strongly that students are inspired to learn when they experience a personal connection to their field of study. While many students are ‘mark-driven’ because their academic futures depend heavily on high grade point averages, I trust that when these students are given the opportunity to voice their motivation for aspiring to be health practitioners, doctors, dentists, and researchers, their curiosity for knowledge amplifies and their brilliance shines. By having students’ connect with their own experiences and leadership potentials, it is my hope that the World Café will inspire students to find deeper meaning in their courses and life pursuits.

**Key Concepts**
*Café 202* will take place during Week 2. This course is mandatory for all Health Science students and proves challenging due to its critical thinking and essay requirements. Many students communicate that this course is the most difficult of all courses required for their degree. The following questions will be given successively in each round of conversation: (see page 2 for more in-depth description of Café format):

- Complete the statement: “If you knew me, you would know…” [continue with statement for entire round]
- When have you experienced leadership related to health? Describe how you felt at this time.
- What gift can I offer the world to create needed change?

**Logistics: Café 202**
**Class structure:**
- 40-50 students; 50 minutes in length.
- Set up progressive (usually 3) rounds of conversation of approximately 12 minutes each.

**Possible Materials:** (10 tables, 4-5 students per table)
- Red and white checked table cloths (plastic) – 10
- White paper – 50 sheets
- Name tags – 50
- Music to create ambiance
- Coloured markers in glass – 10
- Talking stone – 10
- Flowers (carnations) in glass – 5 flowers/glass, 10 glasses

**Planning and Preparation: Café tutorial session of Week 2:**
- **Week 1 class** – Held during first week of class in September. Structure tutorial as if typical session. Conclude by distributing invitations to *Café 202* for following week. See invite on reverse side of page 1.
- **Prior to students’ arrival to class:** Prepare materials for café, play music while students enter room.
- **Instructions to students:** Leave bags at front of room, sit in groups of 4-5 around the table cloths.

**The World Café aligns with UWO initiatives:**
- The mission of the Faculty of Health Sciences is "to lead in the generation and dissemination of knowledge in the areas of health and health care, rehabilitation, physical activity and sport"
- In UWO’s (2006) *Engaging the Future: Final Report of the Task Force on Strategic Planning* one major issue highlighted by the Strategic Planning Task Force is Western’s engagement in “Problem-Based Learning”: “Approach to learning focusing on critical thinking, identification of problems or challenges, and acquiring knowledge to reach solutions through directed inquiry.”

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For more information: www.theworldcafe.com
The café is built on the assumption that people already have within them the wisdom and creativity to confront even the most difficult challenges. Given the appropriate context and focus, it is possible to access and use this deeper knowledge about what is important.

What is the World Café?

- A methodology for creating a living network of collaborative dialogue around critical issues and questions that matter.
- A metaphor that enables us to gain new insights to make a difference in our lives and careers.

Café Guidelines

Conducting an exciting Café conversation is not hard – it is limited only by your imagination! The Café format is flexible and adapts to different circumstances. When these guidelines are used in combination, they foster collaborative dialogue, active engagement and constructive possibilities for action.

- Clarify the Purpose – Pay attention early to the reason you are bringing people together. This helps with the facilitation of questions and highlighting the parameters that are important to achieve your purpose.
- Create a Hospitable Space – When people feel most comfortable to be themselves, they do their most creative thinking, speaking and listening. Aim to create a space that feels safe and inviting.
- Explore Questions That Matter – Café conversations are as much about discovering and exploring powerful questions as they are about finding effective solutions. Your Café may explore a single question only, or several questions may be developed to support a logical progression of discovery throughout several rounds of dialogue.
- Encourage Everyone’s Contribution – It is important to encourage everyone in your meeting to contribute their ideas and perspectives, while also allowing anyone who wants to participate by simply listening to do so.
- Connect Diverse Perspectives – The opportunity to move between tables and meet new people contributes to one’s thinking and links individual discoveries to ever-widening circles of thought.
- Listen Together and Notice Patterns – Listen with an openness to be influenced by the speaker and for deeper questions, patterns and insights. Also, listen for what is not being spoken about.

Café Conversations at a Glance

- Seat 4 or 5 people at small Café-style tables or conversation circles.
- Set up progressive (usually 3) rounds of conversation of approximately 20-30 minutes each.
- Create questions or issues for discussion that genuinely matter in your life, school or community.
- Upon completing the initial round of conversation, ask 1 person to remain at the table as the “host” while the others serve as travelers or “ambassadors of meaning.” The travelers carry key ideas, themes and questions into new conversations. When searching for a new table, challenge travelers to sit with others who appear ‘most different’ from them.
- Encourage table hosts and Café members to write, doodle and draw key ideas on paper at tables.
- Ask the table host to welcome new guests and briefly share the main ideas, questions and themes of the prior conversation. Encourage guests to link and connect ideas coming from their previous table conversations by listening carefully and building on each other’s contributions.
- After several rounds of conversation, initiate a period of sharing discoveries and insights in a whole group conversation. It is in these town hall meeting-style conversations that patterns can be identified, collective knowledge grows and possibilities for action emerge.
Example invitation to students in
Health Science 202f: Critical Thinking in Health Sciences

You’re invited…

**Café 202**

**Date:** Tuesday, September 14th 2006  
**Location:** Somerville House 4218  
**Time:** During scheduled tutorial @ 12:30

RSVP Not Required