

The Seven Principles for a Café Conversation



TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Set the context	This refers to the planning of a conversation where establishing the purpose, time frame and membership as well as having some sense of the outcome is important.	For YPG this means working with young people from the outset in the planning of aspects of curriculum. It is important to recognise the questions they have that they want to explore.
Create a hospitable space	Pay attention to the location - warm, welcoming and comfortable is preferable.	This is not always easy to achieve in classrooms but the arrangement of desks into groups, ensuring that all resources are ready to hand and that the room is tidy can help to create a welcoming atmosphere for your students and others involved.
Explore questions that matter	<p>Find questions that are relevant to the real-life concerns of the group. Powerful questions that "travel well" help attract collective energy, insight.'</p> <p>The Café identifies the following as evidence of meaningful questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - simple and clear - thought provoking - generates energy - focuses inquiry - surfaces assumptions - opens new possibilities - invites deeper reflection - seeks what is useful 	This is where your students can really come to the fore. Being part of the process that identifies where and how their geographies are important to school geography is very empowering for young people. Have a look at the Resources & Ideas area for examples of the kind of geography young people want to learn.
Encourage everyone's contribution	Everyone is likely to contribute if they feel strongly about the questions to be discussed.	Different students will bring different capabilities and different levels of commitment to such a conversation. Some may initially find it difficult to identify their own geographies others may be reluctant to share with a group their geographical lives. However, project experience suggests that time and patience, coupled with encouragement and a sense that you are genuinely interested in what they think can yield remarkable results.
Connect diverse perspectives	The cross-pollination of ideas from a range of diverse perspectives results in greater collective understanding.	Ensuring that students have the opportunity to share their thinking about their geographies with others helps to create a greater sense of joint responsibility and leads to a more thoughtful and relevant developments.
Listen together for insights	Good quality listening that builds diverse perspectives is regarded as the most important element of a café conversation.	Not all young people find listening that easy. Clarifying how to listen helps, but in addition, focusing on students' own geographies means that conversations are more relevant and therefore worth listening to.
Share collective discussions	Create opportunities for participants to share perspectives and be sure to capture the key ideas in some way (flip chart, sticky notes, and paper tablecloths if you have gone the whole hog and created a café 'look').	This sharing process is important in maintaining some continuity between conversations and is one way of valuing individual contributions: video capture, brainstorming and even developing a website, are all creative ways to capture students' thinking. Giving students responsibility for this process reinforces the message that students are working on something quite different and that they are responsible for the direction it takes.