

# GeoConvos Facilitator Quick Guide [alpha]

\*\*\*Please share feedback, questions, and comments at [geoconvos@gmail.com](mailto:geoconvos@gmail.com)\*\*\*

## What is GeoConvos?

Ge●●●con●vos /geo'kanvoz/ Noun

A set of activities to support reflecting on learning, meaning making, and engagement that involves location and movement (geo) and discussion or conversation (convos). See [geoconvos.org](http://geoconvos.org).

## Why a Facilitator Quick Guide?

Our GeoConvos teams has collaboratively developed this quick guide to make it easy for you (educators and program facilitators) to try out these activities. The activities are great for supporting program participants in reflecting on their learning, meaning making, and engagement when involved in educational programming.

## How to use this guide?

The purpose of the quick guide is to get you up and running with one or more of the GeoConvos activities as quickly as possible.

This guide includes “quick” instructions for six GeoConvos activities. While all of the activities have been iteratively developed with attention to relevant educational theory and research, and while all of them are adaptable for various audiences, we don't tell you any of that in this guide. We do clarify key terms for you (or at least what we mean when we use them). Look for **bolded words** in the GeoConvos Glossary (pp. 17-19).

Below is a description for facilitating each activity. The descriptions are no more than 3-pages long. In other words, they're quick reads, and you should be able to quickly implement them. Each activity guide is meant to be read on its own, so feel free to skip around and try out whatever activities make sense for your program needs. More information on adapting these activities, documenting participants' responses, and using the activities for evaluation purposes can be found in the GeoConvos Advanced Facilitator Guide (coming Spring 2018).

## Activities in this guide

How Did You Get Here?

Imagined Futures

Photosphere

Text and Response

Geobio

Five Photos Back

# How Did You Get Here?

## Summary

We **learn** and have **meaningful** experiences while we move from place to place every day. In this activity, participants trace the paths they took to arrive at today's meeting on a paper map, they mark one meaningful or memorable experience during that trip on the map, and they share why this experience was meaningful. Through guided reflection, participants will consider how these meaningful place-based experiences contribute to their ongoing learning.

## Purpose

### For participants:

- This activity will support participants in recognizing that they're learning, making memories, and having important experiences wherever they go throughout the day--not just when they're sitting in classrooms or involved in more formal learning experiences.

### For facilitators:

- This activity can provide insights into the experiences of program participants (e.g., where participants live, how participants travel to program activities, what is meaningful to program participants).
- This activity can help support community by introducing program participants to the lived experiences and insights of others
- This activity offers opportunities for participants to share their knowledge of place with each other and with facilitators

## Objectives

- Participants will reflect on their own learning and meaning making during everyday movement
- Participants will consider the ways that learning takes place across our lives each day
- Participants will consider how places connect with their everyday meaning making, learning, and movement
- Participants will better understand the concept of "**placemaking**"--that places and their meanings to us change and shift over time

## Materials

- Paper or laminated maps (one for each small group or pair of students)
- Markers
- Sticky notes

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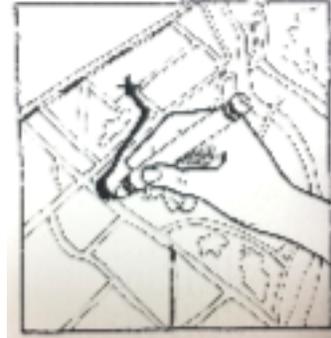
- Audio/video recorders (optional) for facilitators who want a recording of participants' conversations and reflections

### Time for entire activity

20-40 minutes

### Directions/Facilitator Instructions

- Divide participants into groups (2-6 participants in each group) and give each group a map, a set of markers, and sticky notes.
- Ask each participant to use the markers to map their routes to the meeting location for today.
- Participants should each choose one location along their path that is memorable/interesting/engaging and mark this spot with the marker.
- On a sticky note, participants should write a brief reflection: Why is this a memorable/interesting/engaging place?



### Reflection

*In groups*, ask each participant to share their responses to the following questions with their groups:

- 1) Explain why the spot you marked along your path to our meeting location today is meaningful. What happened here or has happened here? What is memorable/interesting/engaging about that spot?
- 2) Did you have any difficulties marking your path to today's meeting location? What was difficult? Why do you think it was difficult for you?
- 3) Were there any surprises as you marked your path to today's meeting location?
- 4) In our small group, others have marked their paths and memorable locations. What's different or interesting about your path as compared to others' paths?

### Wrap Up

*All together*, ask each group to share at least one takeaway from their conversations together with the whole group. As a facilitator, follow up on connections to the purposes and goals for this activity (e.g., if participants connect place to interest/engagement/memory, if participants connect learning/interest/engagement to movement across their lives, if participants connect their path to placemaking or meaning making).

**\*More information on adapting these activities, documenting participants' responses, and using the activities for evaluation purposes can be found in the GeoConvos Advanced Facilitator Guide.**

# Imagined Futures

## Summary

Our **identities** are fluid and formed as we move throughout our lives. Identity formation is influenced by the activities we engage in, the things we learn, and the **places** we pass through and spend time in. In this activity, participants think about their future selves and use maps to identify **places**, **identities**, and **practices** they might be engaged in in five and ten years.

## Purpose

### For participants:

- This activity can encourage personal reflection about participants' current identities and how they might change based on future choices
- This activity can engage participants in thinking about how learning today can influence future choices, pathways, identities, and learning opportunities
- This activity can help participants to explore interactions among places and identities

### For Facilitators:

- This activity can extend facilitators' understanding of the goals and identities of program participants
- This activity can facilitate the design of individualized and interest-driven programming and/or curriculum based on participants' current identities and future goals
- This activity can help facilitators assess participants' thinking about connections between programming and their future learning opportunities and identities

## Objectives

- Participants will think about their identities in a place-based way.
- Participants will be encouraged to reflect on their current identities and how they might change based on choices which span space and time.
- Participants will consider the ways that identities develop and are shaped by experiences "on the move" and "in place"

## Materials

- Paper atlases and maps of the city, country, US, and world (one set of maps for each 2-6 participants)
- Markers
- Sticky notes (2 per person)
- Medium-size dot stickers (preferably two different colors for each participant)

## Time for entire activity:

Approximately 20-40 minutes

### Directions/Facilitator Instructions

- Spread out paper maps on large flat surfaces where pairs or groups can interact with them
- Ask each participant to answer the following questions on 2 separate sticky notes:
  1. Write your name on a sticky note and label “5 years” at the top.
  2. Imagine your life 5 years from now. Answer the following questions:
    - a. Where might you be?
    - b. What might you be doing in life, learning, work?
  3. Write your name on a second sticky note and “10 years” at the top.
  4. Imagine your life 10 years from now. Answer the following questions:
    - a. Where might you be?
    - b. What might you be doing in life, learning, work?
- Next, ask each participant to complete the following:
  1. Using the answer from question 2, place one dot sticker on that location, place sticky note close by
  2. Repeat using answer from question 4.

### Reflection

*In groups*, ask each participant to share their responses to the following questions with their groups:

1. What did you learn about yourself or others by participating in this activity?
2. What factors influenced the future you imagined?
3. Has your participation in this program shaped how you view different locations? If so, how?
4. Were you surprised by any other participants’ imagined futures? Why or why not?

### Wrap Up

*All together*, ask each group to share at least one takeaway from their conversations together with the whole group. As a facilitator, follow up on connections to the purposes and goals for this activity (e.g., if participants connect their current identities to future goals and learning possibilities, if participants connect places to identities and/or to development of identities across space and time).

**\*More information on adapting these activities, documenting participants’ responses, and using the activities for evaluation purposes can be found in the GeoConvos Advanced Facilitator Guide.**

# Photosphere

## Summary

When we think back on memorable or important moments in our lives, those memories are often tied to particular places. The same is true for **learning** and **meaning making**, which often occur in places that come to hold particular meanings, emotions, or memories. In this activity, participants create a 360-degree photo, called a photosphere, of a **meaningful** location and answer questions about why it's meaningful so others can “stand in their shoes” and experience the place too while viewing/interacting with the photo. Through guided interviews with one another, participants will consider the connections of learning and meaning making to **place** and **space**.

## Purpose

### For participants:

- This activity can make it possible for participants to share a meaningful place in a way that others can see and experience it
- This activity can support participants in considering the connections between meaningful moments in their lives and the places these moments occur
- This activity can allow participants to share particular places and experiences at a program site with program providers, friends, and family

### For facilitators:

- This activity can provide insights into the ways in which participants experience program sites
- This activity can be used to allow all program participants to closely examine and/or experience meaningful places at the program site
- This activity can provide insights for facilitators into what elements of a program capture the attention and interest of program participants

## Objectives

- Participants will reflect on places that are meaningful to them and why those places carry meaning
- Participants will investigate new technologies and methods for producing and sharing images
- Participants will consider connections between places of meaning and their experiences in those places--i.e., how do places impact our experiences of learning and meaning making?

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### Materials

- Cell phones, tablets, or other mobile devices with data/wifi enabled
  - Note: Photospheres can be taken without data/wifi enabled, but data/wifi must be enabled for cloud storage, public storage, or posting publicly
- VR Viewers (optional)
  - Note: VR viewers allow for viewing through phone-sized mobile devices; tablets are too large
- 'Google Street View' app or other photosphere-enabled app downloaded to each mobile device
- Data/wifi access with a strong connection to the Internet

### Time for entire activity

Approximately 1 hour

### Directions/Facilitator Instructions

*Prior to conducting this activity, make sure that the photosphere application (Google Street View or other app) is downloaded and open on the devices that participants will use.*

- Divide participants into small groups (2-4 in a group).
- Ask each participant to identify a meaningful place at or around the program site (or other chosen site). Set appropriate parameters so everyone has enough time to travel to and photograph their meaningful place.
- Direct participants to travel to their selected sites, then use the photosphere application to take a 360-degree picture of the location.
  - As they capture the photosphere, group members can interview one another in their respective spaces while noting or recording each participant's response.
  - Try the following questions:
    - What happened/happens here that makes this space meaningful to you?
    - What is your most memorable moment in this space?
    - What does this place feel like to you?
    - Use 3 words to describe this space.
- After all group members have photographed their chosen locations, the group should return to the facilitator.
- When groups return devices, photospheres can be published to Google Maps, where they can be viewed publicly. Photospheres can also be stored privately so that they are only available to account holders.
- After each participant has created, saved, and published a photosphere, create different groups and ask participants to share their photospheres with the new group, giving viewers a "tour" of the space using the VR viewers or mobile devices. While group

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members are viewing the photosphere, the photosphere creator should respond to a few questions. Try these:

- What happened/happens here that makes this space meaningful to you?
- What is your most memorable moment in this space?
- What does this place feel like to you?
- Use 3 words to describe this space.

### Reflection

*In groups*, ask each participant to share their responses to the following questions with their groups:

- 1) What was the experience like of creating the photosphere?
- 2) What was it like to view others' photospheres? What did it feel like?
- 3) Did the experience change anything about your feelings of the place in your or others' photospheres? If so, how?

### Wrap Up

*All together*, ask each group to share at least one takeaway from their conversations together with the whole group. As a facilitator, follow up on connections to the purposes and goals for this activity (e.g., if participants connect their own learning and meaning making to particular places, if participants connect the way it feels to experience a place in this way to an understanding of others' experiences).

**\*More information on adapting these activities, documenting participants' responses, and using the activities for evaluation purposes can be found in the GeoConvos Advanced Facilitator Guide.**

# Text and Response

## Summary

We learn “on the move” every day and have experiences and feelings that come and go but are hard to remember or document. With the text and response activity, we can check in on those moments of learning/experiences “on the move,” document, and remember them.

## Purpose

### For Participants:

- This activity can help participants reflect on their changing states of mind over the course of a day
- This activity can support participants in realizing that they move through many activities and places through the day, and that those activities and places engage and challenge us in different ways

### For Facilitators:

- This activity can provide insights into how program participants engage in learning during unstructured times
- This activity can be used to introduce participants to the concept of learning on the move.
- This activity can provide insights into the daily lives and outside interests of program participants

## Objectives

- Participants will reflect on their own feelings, learning, and meaning making during a regular day
- Participants will consider the ways that learning takes place across all of our lives each day
- Participants will consider how place and space connect with their everyday meaning making, learning, and movement
- Participants will consider the ways that learning, feelings, and meaning making are forgotten/elided in our memories of a whole day

## Materials

- Reporting form (could be Google Forms or another survey/collection tool)
- Contact numbers for participants

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### Time for entire activity

About 15-20 minutes outside of program time spread over the course of several hours; about 40 minutes of introduction and reflection in program

### Directions/Facilitator Instructions

#### Advance preparation

- Collect participant mobile phone numbers
- Request their participation in an activity outside of your regular meetup time.
- Explain that in this activity, they will receive three text messages that will prompt them to text back a picture of something in their field of vision at that particular time and then briefly describe what is going on in that moment. Emphasize that the purpose of the photos is to collect visual data about where participants are in the course of a day; the photos should not be posed, filtered, or curated.
- Outline sensible photo-taking guidelines: for example, participants should only take photos if it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- Set a schedule with the participants that begins and concludes the text and response activity. For example, prompting from 9am to 6pm or deciding on a mutually agreed upon time with participants is a good idea.
- Familiarize participants with the survey form and the kinds of questions the form will ask.

#### Texting

- At the first agreed-upon time, send a message that says something like this:
  - “It’s time for your first text-and-response! Take a photo of what you’re looking at right now and text it back.”
- Follow that text up with a link to your survey form and direct participants to complete the survey as soon as possible.
- Repeat this two more times within the time frame your group has agreed to. After each text prompt, direct participants to complete the survey again.

#### Reflection

##### PART 1: General Report

##### *Report from those who participated*

- Briefly check in with participants about the experience of receiving and responding to texts.
- If any participant elected not to participate, invite them to ask questions of participants about the experience.
- Share the survey results with the group. Invite participants to note any commonalities or surprises they see in the responses.

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### PART 2: Deep Dive

*As a whole group*, dig into one person's day. Ask a volunteer who participated and is willing to discuss their day to share photos one by one from the day. Before they start their share-out, ask

- How was their day overall? What did they do? How did they feel?

As they share their images one by one, ask

- What were they doing in that moment?
- How were they feeling?
- Did participating in the activity change how they thought about their day as a whole?

*In pairs*, turn and talk about how participants experienced the activity, the places they were and the activities they engaged in throughout the day.

### Wrap Up

*All together*, consider how people think about their experiences at the end of a day compared with how they might think about those experiences in the moment. How does our perception of an experience or a moment change with distance and time? As a facilitator, make connections to the ways in which participants are thinking and learning throughout their days, in and out of program time.

**\*More information on adapting these activities, documenting participants' responses, and using the activities for evaluation purposes can be found in the GeoConvos Advanced Facilitator Guide.**

# Geobio

## Summary

Our lives unfold across time and **space**, but we don't often represent our lives--to ourselves or others--in a way that allows us to consider the connections of our most important experiences, memories, and significant learning opportunities to our current choices and to the times and places we've experienced and will experience in the future. Geobio gives participants an opportunity to represent the **story** of their lives on a map and then reflect on that story and the locations and memories that make up that story and lead to the present. Geobios can be created to reflect upon many key moments (i.e. career path, biographical stories, neighborhood related routes, etc.) in order to communicate and reflect on place-based memories and consider possible futures.

## Purpose

### For participants:

- This activity can encourage participants to connect significant moments in life to the places these moments occurred and to reflect on those connections
- This activity can support participants in communicating the story of their life to themselves and others in an interesting and unique way
- This activity can help participants reflect on life pathways in general and how life pathways might be changed and lead to different possible futures

### For facilitators:

- Facilitators can gain insight about the lives and histories of participants who are engaged in programming
- Facilitators can better understand connections between different life pathways and participants' interest and engagement in programming
- Facilitators can consider how programming can contribute to the life and learning pathways of participants

## Objectives

- Participants will identify/pinpoint specific locations on a map that connect to significant moments in their professional pathway
- Participants will investigate new technologies and share stories connected to these locations.
- Participants will use mapping technologies such as Google Maps or Google Earth to tell these stories
- Participants will reflect on key moments in their life and examine the places or stops along the way that were significant to their lives, learning, and/or profession

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### Materials

- Computer connected to the internet
- Google Map My Maps ([google.com/mymaps](http://google.com/mymaps))
- Or, other mapping website or application such as Google Earth (application needs to be downloaded ahead of time)

### Time for entire activity

20-30 minutes

### Directions/Facilitator Instructions

- Participants should each sit down in front of a computer that is opened to Google My Maps or other mapping website or application.
- Facilitators should prepare participants to participate in this activity by reading the following prompt:

#### *Priming Prompt*

*Close your eyes and think about tracing a path through your life that starts here with this moment and traces back in time through key moments, engaging experiences, or powerful learning opportunities that you still remember and that are connected to your life path and to the things you are doing now. As you are thinking about these key moments, place them in time in space. When and where did they occur? Perhaps there are moments from elementary school, middle school, or high school. Maybe moments from your childhood with family and friends. Maybe there are moments early in your career—first jobs or conversations with colleagues, supervisors, or friends. Maybe moments in graduate school. Maybe moments of learning in cultural institutions or museums. Maybe moments alone. Or maybe moments with friends, family, work colleagues, teachers, or professional mentors. Your moments might also be mobile—maybe a drive that you took once or several times is a key moment or a path you walked in the woods from time to time.*

*OK open your eyes. In the next activity, you will share more about some of these key moments you identified in this exercise.*

- After reading, the priming prompt, facilitators should guide participants through the Geobio activity by reading the following prompts activity prompts:

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### Activity Prompts

*You just spent some time reflecting on key moments in your life or professional pathway. Moments that seem connected to your current experience or profession and work when you think back on them. You're now going to have an opportunity to share a little more about at least 4 of these moments.*

*Choose at least 4 of those moments. You're going to plot them on this map using Google My Maps. The tools you'll have available to you are markers to identify spots where these key moments took place and lines or paths. You don't have to use the lines or paths, but your key moments might be mobile and/or better represented with a path—for example, a driving path, a walking path, or a flight path.*

- Facilitators should be certain that the maps are saved (e.g., by logging into one Google account) or shared so that facilitators have access to them.
  - Google My Maps directions:
    - Click Create New Map (Red circle with plus sign in center)
    - Title your map
    - Save/share the map
- Participants will identify each mark on the map by labeling it in Google My Maps and writing a word or two of description.

### In-Process Reflection

- The facilitator will ask in-process reflection questions about each mark on the map.
  - For each mark/path, ask the following:
    - Describe this moment for me.
    - How do you think it connects to your life and/or professional pathway?

### Post-Activity Reflection

*In pairs or groups*, have participants share with others at least one of the places in their pathway by showing their computer screen to others and reflecting on how that place is connected to their current life or work.

### Wrap Up

*All together*, consider connections between time and place in the histories of our lives and how those times and places lead to today and where they might lead in the future. As a facilitator, look for connections to place-based learning and meaning making across our personal histories.

**\*More information on adapting these activities, documenting participants' responses, and using the activities for evaluation purposes can be found in the GeoConvos Advanced Facilitator Guide.**

# Five Photos Back

## Summary

Digital devices give us the opportunity to document, edit, store, and share images and videos from many moments in our lives, from the mundane to the extraordinary. By taking photos and videos as moments unfold in our lives, we create a curated collection of moments that we can cull in order to consider how we are making meaning, learning, and having experiences from moment to moment each day. In this activity, participants go five photos back in the gallery of their phones and share with a partner what that photo is all about and why they took it.

## Purpose

### **For participants:**

- This activity can help participants consider the ways in which they record and recall their daily experiences
- This activity can help participants reflect on the learning that takes place in the course of their day-to-day lives

### **For facilitators:**

- This activity can provide insight into the interests and digital practices of participants
- This activity can provide insight into participants' purposes and audiences for sharing

## Objectives

- Participants will reflect on how they digitally capture and curate their experiences during a regular day
- Participants will consider how place and space connect with their everyday meaning making, learning, and movement

## Materials

- Participants' phones

## Time for entire activity

10-15 minutes

## Directions/Facilitator Instructions

- Break into groups (2-3 participants per group).
- Ask each participant to open the photo gallery app on their phone and scroll 5 photos back.

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- Tell them If they aren't comfortable sharing this photo with others they can go 10 photos back (emphasize that they aren't looking for the coolest thing to share; a "boring" photo is okay)
- Have participants show partners their 5th photo back and answer the following questions:
  - What is your picture?
  - When and where did you take the picture?
  - Was anyone with you? If yes, who?
  - Why did you take the photo?
  - How were you feeling when you took it?

### Reflection

*As a whole group*, ask each participant to respond to the following question: How are you thinking/feeling about how and why you **curate** or capture the world with your phones?

### Wrap Up

*All together*, discuss the reasons we have for documenting our experiences and how what we've documented can help us to reflect on what we're learning and experiencing from moment to moment each day.

**\*More information on adapting these activities, documenting participants' responses, and using the activities for evaluation purposes can be found in the GeoConvos Advanced Facilitator Guide.**

## **GeoConvos Glossary [alpha]**

**Introduction.** The ALPHA version of the GeoConvos Glossary is a list of key terms with quick working definitions-in-progress. Rather than provide dictionary definitions, we have tried to clarify how we use these terms and how they might be useful to you as users of this guide. Because this is the quick guide, we intend for these definitions to be read quickly, so they are each a sentence or two. The definition should give you a quick sense, rather than a thorough exploration, of what we mean when we use them. As with the rest of this GeoConvos Facilitator Quick Guide, please share any feedback, questions, and comments with us about the GeoConvos Glossary at [geoconvos@gmail.com](mailto:geoconvos@gmail.com).

### **curate/curation**

Digital media streams and mobile devices make possible access to a nearly endless stream of information and content--with nearly endless possibilities for producing and sharing content. Curation is the critical digital practice of personalizing content, interpreting and evaluating content, producing content, reorganizing and remixing content, and sharing content with others.

### **identities**

Identities are ways of being, performing, and positioning ourselves--and the ways that our selfhoods are recognized, perceived, and positioned by others. Identities are fluid, changing, and temporary, though they sometimes seem stable to ourselves and others.

### **learn/learning**

Learning is ongoing, lifelong, everyday participation in personally meaningful practices that are connected to one's interests and desires. Learning is not filling one's head with something, but engaging, participating, and working to be and become someone. Learning takes place everywhere--not just in school.

### **learn(ing) on the move**

We sometimes think of learning as only taking place when we are still (e.g., sitting at a desk in a classroom, reading a book, staring at a computer screen, or using a new tool). However, and especially with the increasing ubiquity of mobile and location-aware devices, we engage in learning as we move from place to place over long stretches of time or distance or over short ones. GeoConvos is fundamentally focused on designing for, documenting, and reflecting on learning on the move.

### **meaning making**

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As our lives unfold and we participate in events and interact with others and with texts and materials of all kinds, we come to know and to understand the world and our lives; this is meaning making. It is both making sense or understanding of the world and finding things that *mean something* to us--that we come to feel strongly about, to love or to hate. Meaning and feelings are interwoven, and we understand the world based on how we feel and think as we interact in the world and with the things around us.

### meaningful

Experiences, interactions, engagements, texts, and materials can all be meaningful to us if we come to have feelings, attachments, understandings, or memories related to these things. Some meanings may feel mundane and simple (e.g., a stranger smiling at you while passing on the street, a conversation over lunch) while others may feel life-changing and may last as cherished memories (e.g., a first kiss, a traumatic experience).

### placemaking

We don't passively experience the places we pass through and spend time in. We make them meaningful to us as we interact in them. For example, you might experience a particular place as secure or scary depending on your experiences and interactions there. Placemaking means it is possible for each of us to actively learn in and make changes to the places we engage with.

### place

A place is a space (see below) that has been given particular meaning or value through human engagement and experience (through placemaking). While a space is abstract, a place is bounded in some way and made relevant and meaningful by your experiences and interactions there. Places can be the size of countries, cities, neighborhoods, or sandboxes.

### practices

Practices are shared ways of doing things in the world among a particular group. A practitioner engages in shared practices to solve problems, complete tasks, engage with tools, or use resources. Think, for example, of the ways that doctors, teachers, snowboarders, or video gamers go about doing things within their communities--these are practices.

### story

A story is any kind of narrative or argument you can tell, show, or produce. Stories are created for different purposes and bring together relevant experiences in the world and in life to display some kind of cohesion or connecting threads--though the cohesion and connecting threads might be created and interpreted differently in a different story.

### **space**

Spaces are physical, social, and digital landscapes big and small. Space is differentiated from place in that spaces do not necessarily mark social connections or relevant experiences for individuals that would make them meaningful *places* (see above). Space is the more general or abstracted term for social, physical, and digital landscapes and locations.

## GeoConvos Team

Contact the GeoConvos team at [geoconvos.org](http://geoconvos.org) or [geoconvos@gmail.com](mailto:geoconvos@gmail.com)

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